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Understanding the impact of the Cheshire Children's Fund
Findings from 11 family case studies

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December 2007

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Summary

Introduction

The Children's Fund was created in 2000 as part of the Government's commitment to tackle disadvantage amongst children and young people. The aim of the Fund was to facilitate the development of more extensive and better co-ordinated early intervention services for children and young people aged 5 to 13 years who were at risk of social exclusion. The Children's Fund was implemented in every local authority in England and delivered by 149 local partnerships. Services were provided in a range of settings and through a variety of activities. Cheshire Children's Fund, the local response to this national initiative, is guided by the Children's Fund Partnership which is made up of representatives from local voluntary and statutory organisations.

Study design and methods

The aim of this research was to explore the impact of a number of projects which had received funding from the Cheshire Children's Fund, specifically to learn how these projects had worked with children and families where there had been a positive outcome. The objectives of the research were to identify, for each child or family, the reasons for the provision of a service, the type of service that had been provided, and the impact that it had had on their lives. The research explored the factors that enabled a positive outcome for each family: the similarities and differences between the cases were also examined to determine whether any contributing factors were present across the services.

The 11 projects were selected to cover a range of themes to reflect the breadth of the Children's Fund work in Cheshire. They provided a range of services under the headings of crime prevention, promoting inclusion, success in schools and family support.

The research adopted a multiple case study approach. After interviewing staff to establish background information on the service, each project was asked to find a family who had achieved positive outcomes as a result of their involvement with the service, and who would be willing to participate in the research. The researchers interviewed the service recipients and a parent (in every case, the child or young person's mother). The children and young people who were interviewed were between the ages of 6 and 15 years.

A narrative analysis was conducted at the micro level for each case study and a thematic analysis carried out at the macro level across all of the case studies to draw out important issues for the Cheshire Children's Fund.

Findings and conclusions

The analysis of the case studies suggested that risk factors had been reduced for all of the participants. In some cases, these risk factors were specific and quantifiable, such as increasing school attendance, whilst others, such as increasing self-confidence, are more difficult to measure but could impact upon children and young people in any arena of their lives. The interventions thus reduced the time that children and young people were exposed to risk factors and facilitated the development of protective factors and resilience.

Whilst the research found that the major impact of services was on individuals and their personal skills, with increased confidence being the most commonly reported benefit, these individual changes often had a knock-on effect to a child's or young person's family, school and community. For example, improved personal skills often enabled family members to communicate more effectively, and greater confidence had frequently translated into better behaviour in school and a willingness and ability to contribute to the wider community. In some instances, involvement with a project also prevented a negative impact on a local community, by deterring, for example, antisocial behaviour.

An important aspect of the research was to ascertain the similarities in the key features of each project that resulted in the service making a difference for these children/young people and their families. Three major themes emerged during this analysis.

The most frequently occurring feature of the stories told by the families was the description of the relationships that children and parents had built up with specific project workers. The development of trust meant that parents, children and young people were able to share their experiences with project workers and were happy to take onboard support and advice that was offered.

The second aspect of provision which families highlighted as being an important contributory factor to the positive impact that the service had on their situation was the intensity and/or longevity of their involvement with the project. Frequent and regular contact with a service over a long period of time had a positive impact on families. This

allowed relationships with project staff to develop and ensured family members received ongoing support while they made changes at home, in schools and in the community.

A third feature of the experiences elicited from the case studies was the importance of the holistic approach that was adopted within the projects and the range of services that were offered. Individuals or specific issues were not seen in isolation and the projects were able to be flexible and respond to the diversity of needs that a child's or young person's situation presented. Services tried to identify the underlying causes of a child or young person's difficulties, and provided support to meet each of their needs through different types of services. The flexibility and breadth of project activities often meant that a range of services could be accessed by individuals as their needs changed over time.

The case study approach allowed for a wealth of data to be collected and analysed to identify the processes that increased the likelihood of positive outcomes for families. The triangulation of data sources made the case studies more robust and adoption of a multiple case study approach enabled the identification of recurrent themes across the experiences of different families, providing a broader prospective.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The Children's Fund was created in 2000 as part of the Government's commitment to tackle disadvantage amongst children and young people. The Fund was set up to facilitate the development of services for children/young people aged 5 to 13 years who were at risk of social exclusion. It was underpinned by the three principles of prevention, partnership and participation, the purpose of which was to ensure more extensive and better co-ordinated early intervention services that brought together all partners in a locality. Faith groups, community groups, and voluntary organisations are encouraged to work with local statutory agencies, children, young people, and their families, to deliver high-quality preventative services to meet the needs of communities. The Children's Fund sought to establish local responsibility for the delivery of services to children and encourage the participation of children and young people in every stage (Every Child Matters, 2007a).

The Children's Fund has been implemented in every local authority in England, and is delivered by 149 local partnerships (Every Child Matters, 2007a). Services are provided in a range of settings and through a variety of different activities. The Children's Fund was to be funded to 2008, but in July 2007 the Government announced that cash levels allocated in the financial year 2007-8 would be maintained until 2011 (DCSF, 2007). However, funds will be distributed to local authorities on a non-ring-fenced basis and from April 2008, the Children's Trust will be responsible for priority setting, planning, commissioning and delivering integrated children's services (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

The national impact of the Children's Fund has been evaluated from 2000 by the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF) and it was also a requirement for each local programme to be evaluated.

1.2 Cheshire Children's Fund

Cheshire Children's Fund, the local response to this national initiative, is guided by the Children's Fund Partnership which is made up of representatives from local voluntary

and statutory organisations. The county council is the accountable body for the programme and policy is executed by a lead agency; a voluntary organisation (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The vision for Cheshire Children's Fund has been expressed in the following way:

'We want Cheshire to be a place where everyone can thrive, at work and at play, at home and in the community, in a safe and healthy environment, take an active part in decisions, and continue to learn and develop throughout their lives' (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005, p.3).

1.3 Aims of the study

This report comprises one part of a 4 year monitoring and evaluation project conducted by the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR) for Cheshire Children's Fund. Cheshire Children's Fund commissioned the Centre to undertake an assessment of the impact of its work over the last 5 years. The aim of this research was to explore the impact of a number of projects which have received funding from the Cheshire Children's Fund, specifically to learn how these projects have worked with children and families where there has been a positive outcome.

In focusing on outcomes and how they were achieved, the objectives of the research were to identify, for each child or family, the reasons for the provision of a service, the type of service that has been provided, and the impact that it has had on their lives. The research explored the factors that enabled a positive outcome for each family and the similarities and differences between the cases were examined to determine whether any contributing factors were present across the services.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report is organised into a number of chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of the evidence base related to services that make a difference and Chapter 3 describes the study design and the methods used during the research. Chapter 4 presents the findings from each of the 11 case studies and Chapter 5 discusses these findings, drawing comparisons across all of the case studies and relating them to the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The conclusions of the research and the implications for services are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2

Services that make a difference

2.1 Introduction

Each of the 11 agencies that took part in this research selected a child or family for whom they considered the provision of a Cheshire Children's Fund funded service had made a positive difference. This chapter explores what is meant by 'making a difference', the aspects of a child or family's life that have been addressed by Children's Fund services, how services can have an impact upon the life of a child or family and how this impact can be measured. As part of this discussion, the perspectives of both the service provider and the service user will be considered.

2.2 Making a difference

Increasingly, service providers are being required to demonstrate that the work they are doing is making a positive difference to the lives of the people with whom they are working. Making a difference is often described by the use of terms such as 'achieving outcomes' or 'having an impact', although the definitions of these concepts are, in themselves, the source of some debate.

'Impact' and 'outcome' are words that have been used to describe the difference that a service or intervention has made. This may be a change in circumstances, attitude or behaviour for example, or it may be preventative, that is, ensuring something does not happen or does not get worse.

Some commentators suggest that impact refers to the more direct and immediate effect of an intervention whilst outcomes are longer term and may be the 'product of the synergistic effect of many projects' (Springett, 1998 as cited in Green & South, 2006, p.16). Other authors, however, propose a diametrically opposed view and argue that outcomes are the benefits or changes for the individual as a result of a service and impacts are broader, all encompassing and include the outcomes achieved (Wainwright, 2003).

For the purposes of this research, the term 'impact' will be used to describe the difference that the provision of a service has made for the children and families in the

case studies. A broad definition will be adopted that encompasses the following features:

- impacts may be short, medium or long term (although the timescales for this research do not allow for the exploration of long term impacts);
- impacts may be anticipated (and so relate to the aims and objectives that have been set by the project or service user) or unanticipated;
- impacts may be positive or negative (although this research has been designed to specifically look at positive interventions).

2.3 The focus of Children's Fund services

The overarching aim of the Children's Fund was that the services provided should make a difference to the lives of children and families by encouraging agencies to 'work together to help children overcome poverty and disadvantage' (Children and Young People's Unit, 2001, p.6). Further guidance produced by the Fund specified seven sub-objectives, which identified desired outcomes for children and young people linked to education, health and antisocial behaviour, and, for children and their families, outcomes related to accessible and effective services, participation and capacity building.

The desired outcomes that were established for Children's Fund services have been supplemented by the broader *Every Child Matters* outcomes, articulated in the Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters, 2007b). These five outcomes (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being) provide the overarching framework for all provision for children and young people and, consequently, the impact of Children's Fund services must also be seen within this context.

The Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan for 2005-2007 (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005) identified the *Every Child Matters* outcomes that each of the services that they funded were working towards. A number of outcomes were prioritised for work in Cheshire, namely:

- enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle;
- being protected from harm and neglect;
- having access to high quality learning, training and recreation;

-
- doing well at school, getting the most out of life and developing skills for adulthood;
 - being involved with the community and society and not engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour;
 - and not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving full potential in life (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

Individual services outlined their key objectives from this list in the 2005-2007 Operational and Strategic Plan (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The *Every Child Matters* outcomes were supplemented with a sixth aspiration in Cheshire as it was deemed necessary that families were 'able to access services at a neighbourhood level' (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). Table 2.3.1 illustrates the project themes and the *Every Child Matters* outcomes for each case study included in this research.

2.4 How services can make a difference

A growing body of research that has looked at the way that services can make a difference to children and young people at an individual level has done so within the context of risk and protective factors and the development of resilience. The key findings from this research are briefly presented here in order to provide a context for understanding the work of the services that are the focus of this piece of research.

Risk factors can be defined as "... characteristics or attributes of an individual, family, social group, or community that increase the probability of certain disorders or behaviours arising at a later point in time" (Bhabra, Dinos, & Ghate, 2006, p.3). A common perspective (for example, McCarthy, Laing, & Walker, 2004), has been to allocate risk factors to the four domains of the individual (factors such as low intelligence or early behaviour problems), the family (such as parental depression or inconsistent discipline), school (including academic failure, poor attendance or low expectations from teachers) and the community (factors such as high crime rates or community disorganisation). A child or young person could be exposed to one or more risk factors in any number of these domains but although there is some common ground in the literature, there is no definitive list of the risk factors in each sphere. Once identified, risk factors have also proved to be difficult to measure (Little, Axford, & Morpeth, 2003) and there is little consensus on the significance of different factors (Hansen & Plewis, 2004).

Table 2.3.1 Case study project themes and *Every Child Matters* outcomes

Case Study	Project theme	<i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes
Case study 1	Crime prevention	Be healthy Stay safe Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution Achieve economic well-being
Case study 2	Promoting inclusion – Travellers	Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution Achieve economic well-being
Case study 3	Promoting inclusion – disabled children	Be healthy Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution
Case study 4	Promoting inclusion – disabled children	Be healthy Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution
Case study 5	Promoting inclusion – participation	Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution
Case study 6	Success in school – learning mentors	Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution Achieve economic well-being
Case study 7	Supporting children and families – young carers	Be healthy Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution
Case study 8	Supporting children and families – parenting support	Stay safe Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution Achieve economic well-being
Case study 9	Supporting children and families – domestic violence	Stay safe Be healthy Enjoy and achieve
Case study 10	Supporting children and families – family support	Stay safe Be healthy Enjoy and achieve
Case study 11	Supporting children and families – family support and school support	Stay safe Be healthy Enjoy and achieve
Case study 12	Supporting children and families – family support groups	Stay safe Enjoy and achieve Make a positive contribution

The concept of a risk factor indicates that even if a child or young person is exposed to a risk, there is no guarantee of a negative outcome. The consequences of a child's exposure to one or more risk factors may be dependent upon the context (a risk factor may be more significant at times of stress, transition and crisis), the length of exposure to the risk (whether it is an acute or longer term issue) and the age of the child. Furthermore, the consequences are also influenced by whether or not risk is combined with protective factors, as explored below.

Protective factors can be defined as "... those internal and external forces that help children resist or ameliorate risk" (Fraser, 1997, p.3 as cited in McCarthy et al., 2004). Protective factors can be understood not simply as a mirror image or the absence of risk but as internal and external factors which interact with risk factors in a number of ways.

As with risk factors, protective factors have been considered within the four domains of the individual (factors such as academic ability, optimism and high self-esteem), the family (such as positive expectations from parents and material support), school (including positive management of behaviour, high expectations and child focus) and the community (factors such as pro-social peers and opportunities with sports and clubs) (for example, Howard & Johnson as cited in McCarthy et al., 2004).

McCarthy et al. (2004) consider protective factors as mechanisms, describing four types of protective processes which either interplay with risk factors or negative experiences, or promote positive characteristics or opportunities. It is argued that these processes:

- reduce the impact of, or exposure to risk;
- reduce the chain reactions to negative experience;
- promote self-esteem and achievement;
- provide positive relationships and new opportunities.

The fact that many children and young people who have or are exposed to risk factors do not go on to develop antisocial behaviours or have negative life outcomes is likely to be due to the dynamic interplay between such risks and the protective processes which help to build up resilience. There appears to be a quantitative aspect to resilience in that the more protective factors present, the greater the likelihood of resilience developing (McCarthy et al., 2004). In common with risk factors, the nature of effective

protective factors is thought to vary with the age of the child/young person, with community factors and peer relationships increasing in importance as children get older (Sutton, Utting, & Farrington, 2004).

It is, therefore, the presence of, and interaction between risk and protective factors and the development of resilience that play a large role in determining the life experience of children and young people. If risk factors are present, it may not be possible to change them, but it may be possible to enhance protective factors or processes: resilience is considered to be a key characteristic which enables children and young people to cope or achieve positive outcomes against the odds. Masten, Best, and Garnezy (1990, p.435) describe resilience as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of, successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances”.

Resilience, however, is not considered to be a fixed quality in a child or young person but is something that can increase or decrease as a result of one or more of the following: the number of protective factors that are present, the interaction of risk and protective factors, and other contextual factors. McCarthy et al. (2004) describe three models which have been proposed to explain the relationships between risk and protective factors.

The first is the additive model which represents risk and protective factors on a continuum which counterbalance each other. They are not necessarily polar opposites but the impact of particular risk factors is thought to be directly affected by the presence of a protective factor which will reduce the likelihood of a negative outcome.

The interactive model represents risk and protective factors as things that change over time and interact with each other with varying effects. In this model, protective factors can be seen as a buffer against the effect of a risk factor, something that can break a cycle of risk factors or a process that can prevent the onset of the risk factor. The model suggests dynamic and multi-dimensional relationships between risk and protective factors at the levels of the individual, the family, the school and the community and it suggests that, although complex, there is a need to weight different factors.

The pathways model argues that the impact of risk and protective factors and the development of resilience will be specific to the time and context in which it occurs. It suggests that a child's ‘pathway’ has to negotiate various turning points or crossroads

(such as changing schools, coming into contact with a new peer group, changes to the family structure) where the impact of specific risk and protective factors will depend upon the timing and the impact of previous transitions. If children have been able to adjust to new situations in the past, they may have developed resilience which will help them to cope with later transitions. This model suggests that the relationships between risk and protection are cumulative, multiplicative and context specific.

In accordance with these models of risk and protective factors, the ability of services, such as those funded by Cheshire Children's Fund, to make a difference to vulnerable children and young people can be seen in terms of reducing risk factors, if that is possible, and establishing or enhancing protective factors in order that the child or young person can develop resilience.

2.5 Measuring or demonstrating impact

For the service provider, the impetus to measure or demonstrate whether or not they have made a difference can come from a number of sources. It may be demanded by funding bodies who want to see whether the provision has been effective or whether money could be better spent in other ways, or it may be seen as part of an internal strategy of continuous improvement within an organisation and as integral to service planning. It can also be seen in a broader context as a contribution towards a body of evidence about what works in the provision of services to a particular client group.

A range of approaches can be adopted to measure or demonstrate the impact of a service and the appropriate tool or tools must be chosen to match the purpose of the evaluation. Monitoring information can be collated and analysed to measure quantitative outcomes whilst methods such as case analysis, interviews and focus groups can provide qualitative information which can reveal whether an impact has been made.

The measurement of the impact of a service, however, is not without its pitfalls. Of particular relevance to qualitative research is the attribution of cause, which is to be able to say with certainty that a particular outcome is a direct consequence of the service that has been provided. Research also takes place in a live context where there are disparate influences upon the lives of children and families. Within this context, cause and effect do not occur on a straight forward linear path, rather the impact of a service is contingent on other factors, both positive and negative, that work in a

dynamic way and change over time. In adopting a qualitative case study approach, this research is reliant upon the perceptions of the child or young person, their family and the agency to make the connection between the family's involvement with the service and the impact that it has had upon their life.

2.6 Conclusion

The aim of this research is to link service processes with impacts in order to understand how services, when they interacted with individuals and families, brought about positive changes. Qualitative methods were therefore applied to generate data that could be analysed to provide this broader understanding of the dynamics and processes that made it more likely that a service would make a difference. Chapter 3 provides a full description of the methodology adopted.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology adopted for this research to explore the impact of Cheshire Children's Fund services. The research used a multiple case study approach to reflect upon the impact of a range of Children's Fund services. Families were identified from 12 different projects, the unit of analysis or 'case' in each instance was the family.

3.2 The case study approach

Case studies provide a suitable approach for an in-depth, holistic investigation (Tellis, 1997). The approach is suited to the investigation of contemporary phenomena when explored within their real-life context and is a particularly useful tool when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2003). This suggests that the case study approach could be valuable for exploring the reasons behind a family's identified success following their involvement with a service.

For detailed investigation of a real-life intervention, case studies offer a valuable approach, particularly when the research is interested in the success or failure of the intervention and the number of variables likely to occur render an experimental approach invalid (Keen & Packwood, 1995). This research aims to explain the causal links assumed between the project intervention and the impact on individual families which might prove too complex for a survey or experimental approach (Yin, 2003). As interventions usually require the involvement of several interested groups, a case study design also facilitates investigation of different interpretations of events (Keen & Packwood, 1995). The use of multiple sources of evidence enables the researcher to investigate a wide range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues and facilitates exploration of converging lines of enquiry (Yin, 2003).

Although case studies do not allow for statistical generalisation as they are not taken from a representative sample, they do enable analytical generalisation; that is, the opportunity to apply theoretical generalisations (Yin, 2003). The multiple case study approach allows for increased theoretical generalisation and is often deemed to

represent a more robust approach than a single case study design (Yin, 2003). This will mean that explanations and conclusions from such research can be applied to other similar settings and inform policy and practice.

3.3 Sampling

As the aim of this research was to explain the causal links of a phenomenon rather than to explore its prevalence in the real world, application of a statistical sampling logic would have been inappropriate (Yin, 2003). A multiple case study design requires theoretical replication of a study according to the requirements of the context: cases are therefore chosen at the discretion of the researcher with regard to the complexity of the phenomenon and the context in which it is studied (Yin, 2003). Keen and Packwood emphasise that in the selection of sites for study, researchers benefit from expert advice from those with knowledge of the subject under investigation (Keen & Packwood, 1995). Yin is more explicit in recommending that in multiple case study designs, researchers need prior knowledge of the outcomes, and how and why they might have occurred in order to select cases (Yin, 2003).

The projects were selected to cover a range of themes, to reflect the breadth of Cheshire Children's Fund activities. The 12 projects were identified by the Children's Fund programme manager who had prior knowledge of the services and their outcomes. In order to reflect some of the more innovative work of the Fund, the research included projects that were newly created with Cheshire Children's Fund monies rather than those that were previously in existence. The projects were contacted in the first instance by the programme manager, who outlined the aims of the research and what participation in the study would involve. This was followed by an e-mail from the researchers with a participant information sheet attached, inviting a representative of the project to attend an interview. The participant information sheet for service providers can be found in Appendix 1.

The research also adopted a purposive sampling approach to the selection of families and relied upon the knowledge of the project staff in their identification. As the aim of the research was to explore how a positive impact had been achieved for a child or young person, project staff were asked to select a family whom they thought had benefited from involvement with their service. Given their prior relationship with families, project staff were asked to pass the information packs to prospective families

and tell them about the research. The project staff then obtained consent from the family and returned consent forms and contact details to the researchers.

3.4 Data collection methods

A range of methods were used to explore the experiences of families. Multiple methods allow researchers to address different but harmonizing research questions and enhance validity and ease of interpretation in a study (Robson, 1993). Keen & Packwood (1995) argue that when carrying out a case study, 'no one method is sufficient to capture all salient aspects of an intervention' (p.444). The study used multiple data sources to bring together the different perspectives of the service provider, parent, and child or young person and to examine both 'correspondences and discrepancies' in their views (Robson, 1993, p.383). This helped the researchers to explore common experience and understanding of 'the problem' and 'the solution' and to identify differences in perception or outlook. Interviews were conducted with service providers, parents and children/young people and project staff were also asked to complete a short questionnaire about their work with their chosen family.

3.4.1 Service provider interview

Prior to the fieldwork with individual children/young people and families, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a member of staff from each project to establish background information on the service and their work with families. Consent was obtained at the beginning of the interview; the consent form can be seen in Appendix 2. The main purpose of the interview was to establish a broad picture of the service in order to place the family case study in context. Services were asked to describe the type of services that they provided and to identify the initiatives that were facilitated as a result of the funding from the Cheshire Children's Fund. The interview schedule for service providers can be seen in Appendix 3. The interview also enabled the researchers to ascertain the journey made by families through the service and to understand how each service established aims and objectives and measured outcomes for work with individual families.

Semi-structured interviews have a 'loose' structure consisting of open-ended questions identifying the themes to be explored, but allow the interviewer or respondent to diverge in order to follow up particular issues in more detail (Britten, 1995). Thus, although the interview topics and questions are defined initially to allow a degree of

comparison between respondents, the semi-structured format allows interviewees to express ideas that are important to them, and answers can be clarified and complex issues probed (Bowling, 2002). This structure ensured that similar background information was sought from each project, but allowed respondents to provide other pertinent information specific to their organisation. Information gained from the service provider interview was used to produce the background information for each project in the case studies within this report. Information was checked for accuracy with the relevant service staff following the interview.

3.4.2 Service provider questionnaire

A short questionnaire was used to collect information from the service provider about the nature of their contact with the family chosen for interview; a copy of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix 4. Service providers were asked to complete and return the questionnaire to the researchers once a family had consented to participate. The questionnaire asked about the service that the particular child or family had received (or was still receiving) and aims and objectives that might have been established for work with them. The questionnaire also asked service providers about the outcomes achieved and their perception of the impact of work with their chosen family.

At this stage of the research, one agency was unable to identify a family willing to participate in the research and so was withdrawn from the research. The analysis presented in this report is therefore based on the remaining 11 agencies.

Agencies were left to complete the form either with or without the family, depending on their preference. The information collected was used to prepare the researchers for an interview with the family, as by identifying the names of venues, project workers and activities, the researchers could develop a meaningful interview schedule that was grounded in the reality of the family's specific experience.

3.4.3 Family interviews

Information packs given to families contained an introductory letter, a participant information sheet for the parent or carer, an information sheet for the child or young person, and consent forms for the parent/carers and child/young person to sign. The contents of the pack can be found in Appendices 5 to 9. Semi-structured interview

schedules were also used with the family; interviews were conducted with the child or young person involved with the project and one of their parents. The children and young people were aged between 6 and 15 years and in some cases, there was more than one child/young person involved in the project. In Case Study 2, circumstances meant that an interview with the elder sibling of a young person involved in the project was the only interview conducted.

Individual interview schedules were prepared for each family, using information from the agency interview and questionnaire, with separate schedules for the parent and child/young person. The themes used for the interviews with parents can be found in Appendix 10 and an example of an individual interview schedule for a parent is shown in Appendix 11. Themes for the child's/young person's interview are shown in Appendix 12 and an example of a child's interview schedule can be found in Appendix 13. All interviews were audio taped with the permission of the participants.

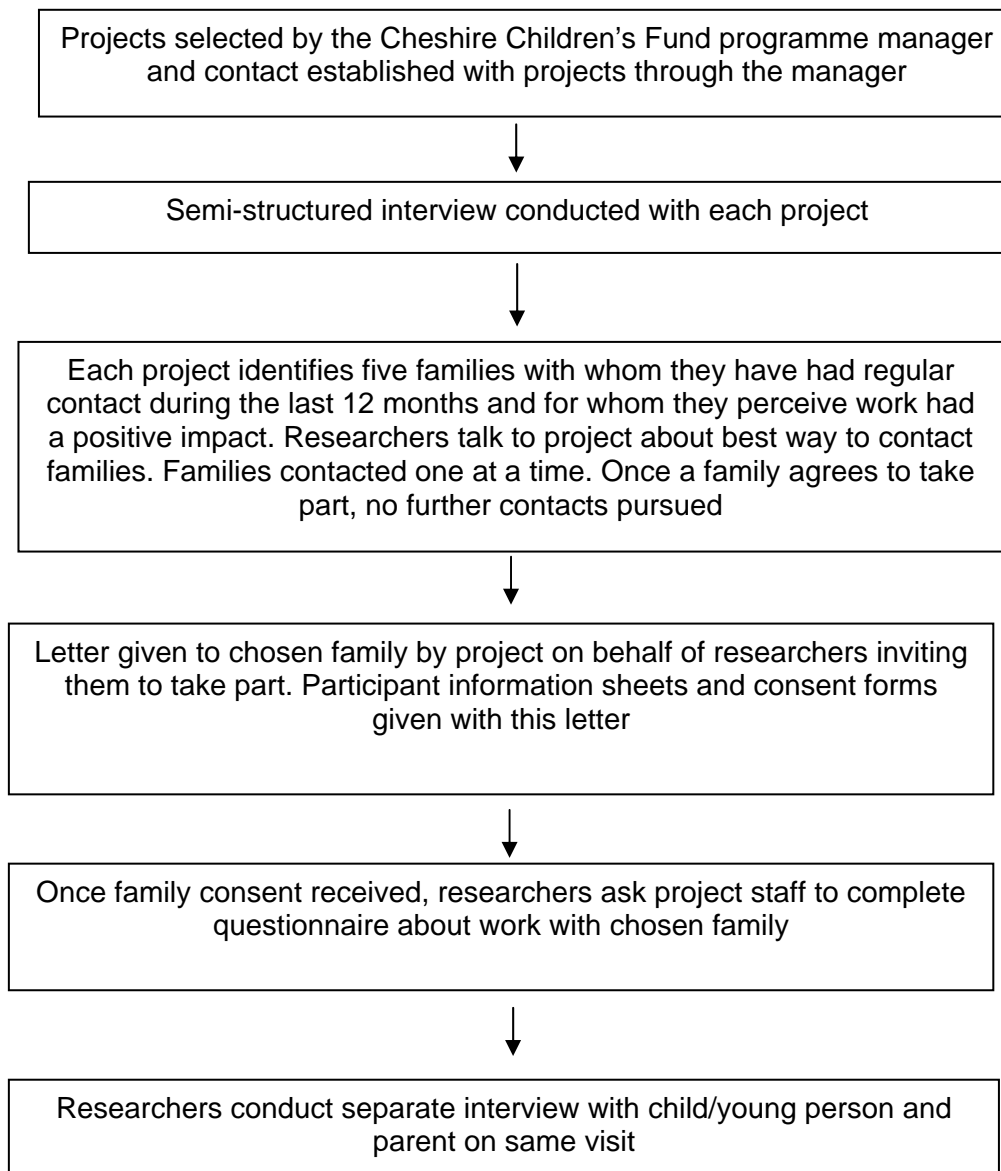
The interviews with parents explored their own experiences (if they had been in receipt of a service) as well as their perception of the impact of the service on their child and on the family as a whole. Children and young people were asked to talk about their experience and their views on the impact of the project on their lives. Younger children were asked to think about their experience in terms of a journey, exploring what life was like before they started using the service, what is it like now and how they feel about the future: the interview was given a visual perspective through use of a picture of a road on which they were encouraged to write or draw, a process which can encourage ownership of the activity for children (Wilkinson, 2000). The picture used in the child interviews can be found in Appendix 14. The narrative approach adopted allowed younger children to talk about their experiences in their own way with some guidance from the researcher. The interview with older children and young people also used a narrative perspective but without the use of the visual aid.

Consent for participation from children and young people was treated as an ongoing process and repeated at several stages of the interview process. After obtaining initial consent from children/young people via project staff, consent was again explained and requested by the researcher at the beginning of all of the interviews. Each participant was informed that they could withdraw from the interview and from the study at any time. As it is recommended that interviews with children or young people are conducted in surroundings with which they are familiar (Fraser, Lewis, Ding, Kellett, & Robinson, 2004), the majority of interviews with children/young people were conducted in the

family home in the presence of a parent. For three case studies, interviews were conducted on the project facilities in the presence of a parent or project leader; interviews for one case study were conducted on a one-to-one basis in an open office at the project centre.

A flow chart summarising each stage of the fieldwork is shown in Figure 3.4.3.1:

Figure 3.4.3.1 The stages of the fieldwork



3.5 Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were coded to maintain the anonymity of the participants. A narrative analysis was conducted at the micro level for each case study and a thematic analysis was carried out at the macro level across all of the case studies to draw out important issues for the Cheshire Children's Fund.

Narrative research is a useful way to explore people's lived experiences that acknowledges the temporal nature of those experiences and allows the researcher to explore processes and change over time (Elliot, 2005). The chronological dimension of the family interviews enabled respondents themselves to construct a narrative and so identify relevant themes and causal links. As this method of analysis facilitates the construction of meaning during the interview stage, fragmentation of respondents' experiences are avoided (Elliott, 2005). This enabled the researchers to identify important events and experiences in each case study from the perspective of the service users and provided insight into the family's interpretation of the service received and the impact it had upon their lives. An important part of this analysis was the consideration of the 'correspondences and discrepancies' in the interpretations of impact from the provider, the parent and the child/young person (Robson, 1993, p.383).

Qualitative thematic analysis was carried out across the case studies using a charting technique, whereby a coding frame is developed and the codes are progressively collapsed and grouped by the emerging themes and concepts. This enabled the researchers to identify similarities and differences across the case studies, rendering thematic generalisation possible.

3.6 Ethical approval

Ethical approval from the Centre for Public Health Research Faculty Research Ethics Committee was gained in May 2004 for the local evaluation and monitoring of Cheshire Children's Fund. As part of this approval, it was agreed that for future elements of the evaluation, a research protocol should be submitted to the Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee for approval. Final approval for the protocol was granted in March 2007.

3.7 Conclusion

Use of a multiple case study approach facilitated the exploration causal links in relation to a family's success with a project and enabled some degree of comparison across different sites and situations. The qualitative methods employed and the narrative approach to the family interviews allowed the respondents to shape their own case study. The use of multiple methods and data sources enhanced the validity of the research and allowed the researchers to explore agreement and discrepancies with regard to the impact of the work of each project.

The following chapter presents the findings from each of the cases explored. Background information, obtained from the service provider interviews, is provided on each of the services and the family's experience is presented according to their own interpretation of events. The impact of the service and outcomes achieved by each family are summarised towards the end of each case study and factors identified by the family as key to their success with a service are presented.

Chapter 4

Case studies

4.1 Case study 1 - crime prevention

This project was funded from 2003 to run preventative schemes with the most vulnerable 9 to 13 year olds in the neighbourhood. Working closely with schools, the project aims to give 50 nominated children the support they need to stop them getting involved with crime and encourage them to engage at school. Although the lead organisation had worked on similar projects in other areas of the country, it had not previously undertaken any crime prevention work with this age group in Cheshire.

The project is based in the local community centre. A programme of activities is offered to selected young people after school and during the school holidays – these include leisure activities at the community centre; excursions such as swimming, behaviour courses such as anger management, and one-to-one support sessions. The young people are given the opportunity to run a tuck shop at the group, and day and residential trips are also organised. There are services for parents in the form of parenting courses and informal support and advice.

Young people are referred to the scheme via agreement from a multi-agency panel which includes representatives from all neighbourhood schools, health services, the Youth Offending Team, the local police, and Child and Adult Mental Health Services. Professionals from within these organisations may recommend a young person to the panel, which then selects 50 young people locally, considered most at risk of involvement in crime. An Onset assessment (Youth Justice Board, 2006) is undertaken which identifies the needs of each child or young person, including risk and protective factors in relation to involvement in crime: from this an action plan is produced. These individual action plans are reviewed regularly and the work of the group is reviewed on a quarterly basis. The Onset assessment is repeated when the young person is ready to leave the project.

In the Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan, the project identifies itself as working towards four *Every Child Matters* outcomes: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, and make a positive contribution (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

The project also works towards the local target, being able to access services at a neighbourhood level (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). Although enjoy and achieve is considered to be the most commonly realised *Every Child Matters* outcome for young people on the scheme, the project reported that it also achieves all other outcomes with most children with whom they work.

4.1.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

The case study family includes Jennifer and her two sons, Michael who is 15 years old and Jacob who is aged 10 years.

Michael was referred to the programme at the age of 12 by his school. The project identified a need to address anger management issues and to increase Michael's level of self-esteem and confidence. Michael also required assistance that would help him manage his difficult behaviour at school as this was causing problems on an almost daily basis. Michael said that he had difficulty concentrating in school and was not able to control his temper. This view was supported by his mother, Jennifer:

'School-wise he wasn't doing any work, fighting, every other day fighting, abuse to teachers and staff, wrecking classrooms, literally, just tables and chairs, in a matter of minutes. Jumping out of windows at the school because he didn't want to be in school, he wanted to be at home.'

Michael reported that he would often fight in school and his mother stated that he was also aggressive at home. Jennifer said:

'Me and Michael were always fighting and arguing. He wouldn't think twice of pinning me up against the wall by the throat.'

Michael and Jennifer also reported that visits from the police were becoming a regular occurrence at their home because of Michael's behaviour in the neighbourhood. Michael suggested that this was, in part, due to his involvement with '*the wrong crowd*' whilst Jennifer attributed Michael's anger and concentration difficulties, in large part, to his attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which she found difficult to manage.

The family were contacted by the project and invited to the community centre to meet with staff and receive information about the scheme. Jennifer was initially alarmed by the request and indignant about the indictment of her son she perceived it represented.

On finding out more about the programme, however, she was soon convinced that it would be beneficial to Michael:

‘And we just booked him in straight away, it was just like, “Oh God yeah, this is going to benefit Michael so, so much.”’

Michael’s initial reaction was not as positive, as he and his mother attested, but once he started attending, he quickly became absorbed into the group. Michael attributed his initial reluctance to the fact that he would not know anyone else who attended:

‘Well to begin with I come here for me meeting. It was with Jo and Jackie [the project workers]. They like convinced me to come to the project. And then I come along and then the first time I come here I didn’t really want to come because I didn’t know anyone, until I seen someone from my school I thought it might not be that bad. Then I started doing the arts and crafts and playing pool and that, I started to come here all the time.’

Jennifer’s younger son was referred to the group 2 years later when he was 9 years old. He was experiencing similar difficulties to his brother. His mother said:

‘Jacob was the same [as Michael] to be honest [he was referred] because he wasn’t getting any work done at all; he’d rather sit under the desk and cry.’

Jacob agreed that his behaviour in school was a problem, reporting that he would frequently be sent home for fighting. Jennifer reported that Jacob also has ADHD, but exhibits different behavioural difficulties from his brother; while Michael displays aggression, Jacob experiences anxiety and other emotional issues. Jennifer perceived that Jacob’s response to the scheme was much more positive than his brother’s, largely because he was eager to follow his older brother. Jacob described his expectation of the scheme as somewhere *‘where you talked to people about things,’* suggesting that he saw it as more than a social outing.

For the benefit of the family as a whole, the project also identified a need to help Jennifer develop parenting strategies for managing the behaviour of her two boys and to develop a support network. Jennifer perceived that her own stress, following a difficult divorce, was impacting on her relationship with Michael in particular.

The project’s objectives broadly corresponded with the family’s own goals, although Jennifer identified an additional objective which was that her children should improve their social skills.

4.1.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Although Michael was referred to the project first, Jennifer and Jacob also got involved with the project at a later date.

4.1.2.1 Michael's experience

Michael attended the project twice a week. At the drop-in session at the community centre he would play pool or table tennis or sit and chat with others. Jennifer said that Michael was very involved in the group from the beginning, thanks to the encouragement of the support workers.

Michael also received one-to-one support from the project workers. He was collected from school during the lunch break when he would chat with the project worker over lunch about things that were happening at school. Michael appeared to appreciate this access to some private space at school:

'It was strange [talking to the project worker] because I'd never really like done it before, so I thought, I don't know what's going to happen. [It was easy to talk to her] because there was no one else around sort of saying, "Oh yeah but you can't say that because you did it" ... So it was fine 'cos I was by myself.'

Jennifer also referred to several instances where Michael had spoken to a project worker following an incident either at school or at home. Jennifer said that the project workers were able to encourage Michael to talk freely about his feelings which she herself found reassuring following a stressful incident. Jennifer attributed the success of this one-to-one work to the non-judgmental approach of staff:

'The kids know that they can come to any member of staff and they're not judged which I think is a big part of it ... Michael could have broke a window and Jo [the project worker] won't lecture him, she won't shout at him ... She'll sit him down and say, "Right, why did you do it? You need to write a letter about it," things like that. Whereas I think at school, it's like: exclusion, full stop. They don't kind of look into why it started.'

Places on the trips or excursions had to be earned according to the project's reward points system for good behaviour. Jennifer considered that the points system was very effective, as the children valued the rewards on offer and disliked being denied access to the group as punishment. Both Michael and Jacob said that the residential trips were their favourite element of the project. Both children were also involved in camping and

outdoor sports activities, which they enjoyed. Jennifer perceived that the range of activities and the active element of the project maintained her sons' interest in the centre, which they confirmed.

Both children had taken anger management courses at the centre. Jennifer said that she thought this was particularly important for Michael whose temper was unpredictable. The fact that others at the project were doing the same course appeared to diminish Michael's sense of isolation:

'I thought I was going to be the only one on it [the course]. I thought if it's just me, I'm not going, it's not just me that needs the anger management, there's loads more people. But until I saw other people, I thought then if it's not just me, then yes.'

Involvement with the project led to other opportunities for Michael; at a project worker's suggestion, he joined the air cadets. Jennifer believed that this was not an opportunity she could have created for him herself and she was grateful that the project staff had used their knowledge to help find an outlet for Michael's interests. She praised the project's commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of every individual. Michael achieved several awards with the project including the Duke of Edinburgh award and a sailing qualification. Following involvement with a scheme organised by the local fire station to give young people experience of the work of the fire service, Jennifer reported that Michael had criticised local youngsters for carrying out a prank call to the fire service.

After completing the crime prevention project, Michael was invited to become a volunteer where his role involves supporting other young people on the project. He has also been given the opportunity to go on a volunteering trip to Gambia where he will undertake sports with children in a primary school.

4.1.2.2 Jacob's experience

Jennifer reported that Jacob attends the Monday night group each week, where he plays pool, does sports and mixes with other children; Jacob also highlighted the craft activities and the homework club. Jennifer reported that after they have finished their homework, the young people get an opportunity to play. Jacob said that his homework completion had improved since starting at the club:

'I never used to do my homework and I used to get in trouble for not doing homework and then, like, I'm top of the class for handing in homework now.'

Jacob also reported that he had learned new skills and conquered fears as a result of new activities:

'I was scared of heights and now I'm not scared of heights and I was struggling to ride a bike but now I can.'

Jacob has also been involved in one-to-one work with a project worker and has done the anger management course. Jacob reported that he had learned alternatives to fighting when dealing with difficult situations.

4.1.2.3 Jennifer's experience

After limited contact with the project when Michael first took part, Jennifer began to get more involved. She was very positive about the parenting courses that she completed, which she said had increased her confidence in her parenting role.

'I found it really hard to understand why both of my boys had ADHD, and both of my boys were on the project. At the time it was like, "Well why me, what have I done?" It was only when I started doing the courses that it was like, "Well it can't be me because I'm doing exactly what you're telling me to do. What you're kind of showing us is the right thing, I'm doing. So it can't be me." Do you know what I mean? It's obviously ... what they've got.'

Jennifer developed good relationships with staff at the project, which enabled her to seek support in times of crisis, even out of office hours. The constancy of their support was valued by Jennifer and, in her experience, was unique to this project. Jennifer, Michael and Jacob have all been involved in excursions for the whole family. Jennifer perceived that these outings provide a valuable opportunity for local families to undertake an activity together, which could not otherwise be afforded.

Jennifer has now taken on a supporting role at the project where she works as a volunteer and where she has recently applied for a job as a support worker.

4.1.3 Impact of the service

All members of the family perceived that involvement with the project had a positive impact on their lives. This was manifested in a number of outcomes.

4.1.3.1 Social skills

Jennifer considered that contact with other children experiencing similar difficulties had reduced her own children's sense of isolation. She suggested that the nature of the activities undertaken, which demanded team work and acceptance of others, encouraged tolerance and improved communication skills amongst the young people on the project. Michael in particular, Jennifer perceived, had more confidence to mix with his peers and Michael reported his identification with others at the project:

'When I started I thought, I bet you anything it's just for naughty people, but until I realised it's people with learning difficulties and all that, I thought, it's hard because it's not just me; like everyone else that's got other problems like at home and all that. I thought they deserve to have their own rights just as everyone else.'

It was Jennifer's view that the positive approach of project staff and their acceptance of Michael had an impact on his ability to integrate with others.

Jennifer said that Jacob's social skills had also improved, which enabled him to gain more enjoyment from playing with his friends. She also reported that she had an increased sense of trust in Jacob that he would play without fighting or causing a nuisance in the neighbourhood.

4.1.3.2 Confidence

Jennifer perceived that the confidence Michael had developed in the group extended to his wider experiences. She cited several occasions when he had volunteered to take a central role at the group or to represent the project publicly:

'There was a conference at [a local hotel], you know just highlighting what they [the project] do, and he stood up in front of about 100 people Jo [the project worker] said, and just read out his speech. He'd never have dreamed of doing that ... so like I said I just don't know what we would have done if this wasn't here.'

Jennifer considered that Michael's confidence had translated into greater independence. She said:

'I was lucky that Michael did go to Air Cadets ... he went to annual camp last year with them, and he's going away this year with them as well. He'd never done it before because he wouldn't leave ... he'd be hovering around his mum. Whereas now, because they've given him the confidence that he can go; he doesn't have to rely on me.'

The parenting course gave Jennifer confidence in her parenting skills and a better understanding of ADHD. Jennifer's involvement as a volunteer at the community centre, which stemmed from her participation as a parent, has also boosted her self-esteem and she is now applying for a paid position at the centre. She cited the following experience with the project:

'We went swimming yesterday [with the project]; there's one little boy who's quite hard, he'd actually said to Jo (Jo told him that I was going for a job), "I tell you now, if you don't give Jennifer that job, I'm not going to be good for anyone else, because I like her" ... And I thought; that's made my day, to know that a child that nobody can really interact with, I can get on with. God yes, I love it.'

4.1.3.3 Anger management

Michael was very positive about the anger management courses and stated several times during the interview that he was calmer as a result of both the courses and his involvement in the project as a whole. He reported that the aggressive and erratic behaviour he was exhibiting at school had ceased.

4.1.3.4 Aspirations and achievement

Both Jennifer and Michael were keen to highlight the public recognition Michael has received for his achievements with the project and at school. His mother contrasted this with the letters she used to receive from school regarding bad behaviour, she said:

'I mean, he's in newsletters at school, all for the right reasons whereas before it was like brown envelopes through the door, "Oh hell", you know. But it is, if there's not one of us in the paper, there's something wrong you know, we're not doing our bit anymore.'

Michael was proud of his achievements, citing numerous examples of volunteering and sporting successes. Jennifer and Michael had both recognised a change in Michael's career aspirations which was attributed to involvement with the project. Jennifer said:

'Michael, he [had] nothing [he was] interested in at all. He didn't care, he would have happily have told you, "I'll go on the dole." Now he's not sure whether he wants to go in the Air Force, he wants to be a mechanic, he doesn't know what he wants to do now, which from having nothing, to [having] all them things'

Michael confirmed that his career aspirations had changed, saying that on leaving school he would probably have been *'looking at the worst job you can ever think of and*

then applying for it and probably not get 'cos I never got my GCSEs.' He said that he now wants to get into the Royal Air Force and become an engineer.

4.1.3.5 Behaviour

Jennifer reported that Michael's behaviour at school had improved: his concentration was better, as was his response to authority. Jennifer perceived that Michael's respect for staff at the project had been translated into the school context. Michael was keen to report his teacher's recognition of the change in his behaviour:

'One of the teachers in my school put my name [forward] for me to do [the scheme] ... so I come here and I got on with it and then [the teacher] goes, "Have you been going to that programme?" "Yeah." "I can tell 'cos you're improving" ... I sometimes have the odd blip but last year I had one detention out of the whole year.'

Jacob also said that his behaviour at school had improved and that he is no longer sent home from school.

Jennifer talked about her children's behaviour outside school and reported that they were no longer involved in antisocial behaviour, which she believed was due to the diversion the project created for them, keeping them occupied and out of trouble. She perceived that the project intervention had been timely:

'I could have seen him [Michael] with an ASBO [antisocial behaviour order] because he was just ... uncontrollable; there was just nothing I could do. There was nowhere for him go because there's no youth clubs round here, even if I could get him involved in I don't think he would have gone. For me I definitely think that Michael would definitely have got an ASBO, definitely without a shadow of a doubt.'

Michael also anticipated that his behaviour before the project might have led to a criminal record, reporting that he would *'probably be in one of those little kiddy prisons.'*

4.1.3.6 Respite

Jennifer said that initially, Michael's time at the project provided a welcome break and the opportunity to spend time with her other children. Michael's behaviour had been very difficult to manage; trouble with the police or school was occurring almost daily, creating a constant source of stress for Jennifer. Jennifer then became increasingly involved with the project as Michael's behaviour improved, suggesting that her need for respite of this type had been alleviated.

4.1.4 Summary of outcomes

The family's involvement with the project resulted in an increase in the children's self-esteem and confidence and an improvement in their behaviour and engagement with school. Jennifer had also developed in confidence, both as an individual and as a parent, as the agency had hoped. The outcomes for the family can be summarised using the *Every Child Matters* framework as Table 4.4.1.1 illustrates.

Table 4.4.1.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Michael and Jacob have been involved in physical pursuits and healthy eating activities. Jennifer has increased self-esteem.
Stay safe	Michael and Jacob have been removed from violent antisocial behaviour. Michael and Jacob have learnt to give consideration to safety in outdoor pursuits.
Enjoy and achieve	Michael and Jacob have been integrated into the social group of the club. Michael has achieved sporting and volunteering awards. Michael and Jacob have improved concentration in school.
Make a positive contribution	Michael and Jennifer have volunteered at the project. Michael has a role as local ambassador for young people.
Achieve economic well-being	Jennifer's confidence has increased and skills learned as a volunteer have facilitated a job application. Michael has improved career aspirations.

In looking at the similarities and discrepancies in the views expressed by the project staff, the young people and the parent about the impact of the service, there was unanimous agreement that Jennifer and Michael had increased in confidence and that both of the boys were better behaved; there was general agreement that Michael in particular had better management of his anger. The project staff and the family agreed that the boys' levels of achievement were improved and Michael's aspirations had increased. The family also perceived that the boys had developed a sense of tolerance through working with other children at the project and Jennifer identified a new sense of independence in Michael and considered that both of her children had improved social skills.

4.1.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

Several factors were identified by the family as being significant to their success with this project.

4.1.5.1 Relationship with project staff

Over the 3 years that the family has been involved with the project, Jennifer learned to trust staff at the project and came to rely upon them during times of crisis. She was happy to take their advice regarding her children's behaviour. The non-judgmental attitude of staff helped Jennifer to trust the staff and to open up to them. Jennifer also perceived that the boundaries established by staff with regard to behaviour were firm and maintained through the involvement of children in decision making. She perceived that the non-authoritarian approach to discipline appealed to her children.

Both of the children had undertaken one-to-one work with the project staff and reported on these sessions positively. Michael, in particular, was able to open up to project staff following particular incidents when he was unable to talk to anyone else and his continued involvement with the project as a volunteer is a testament to the good working relationship he has with the staff. It is likely that the long term nature of the project facilitated the development of a positive relationship between the project and the family.

4.1.5.2 Holistic approach

The project also worked with parents and Jennifer's involvement in the parenting courses gave her confidence in her ability to reinforce the messages given by the project. Her close liaison with the project, over difficult issues such as Michael's behaviour in school, facilitated Michael's trust in the staff. The involvement of the whole family in activities at the centre fostered a sense of belonging and this appears to have helped the development of the boys' confidence and self-esteem, which, in turn, has enabled them to thrive.

4.1.5.3 Routine

Jennifer perceived that the activities at the project provided a positive focus for her children and activities that they wanted to be involved in: the project kept the boys occupied and also gave them a sense of belonging. Jennifer said that the use of

rewards and penalties was an effective way of motivating the children as they valued the activities and involvement in the group.

Jennifer considered that the weekly routine of attending the project and the activities undertaken whilst they were there was a stabilising influence for her children. Their involvement in positive activities and the reward for their achievements helped to improve their long-term aspirations.

4.1.5.4 Social interaction

The opportunity to mix with children experiencing similar difficulties appeared to diminish Michael's sense of isolation. Michael became more amenable to the intervention once he understood that his behavioural difficulties were not unique. The development of a group identity at the project helped both boys to improve their social skills and being part of the group helped to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

4.2 Case study 2 - promoting inclusion (Gypsy-Travellers)

This project was established in 2003 with funding from the Cheshire Children's Fund. It was initiated by the local education authority, which identified a need to improve relations between the local settled population and the large Gypsy-Traveller¹ population within the region. A local high school was approached to set up an after school club for both children from the settled community and children from the Gypsy-Traveller community. The *Every Child Matters* outcomes identified for the service were enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

The main objective for the club was to integrate the two communities, but in addition, it was hoped that the club would help to promote positive attitudes to secondary education within the Gypsy-Traveller community by building a relationship of trust between this community and the school. The club, originally run at a local internet café

¹ Terms used to describe people from nomadic or semi-nomadic communities have recently become controversial (Bohpal, 2004). The term 'Traveller' has received criticism as it does not reflect different preferences within the community with regard to their title. Therefore, as used by Holloway (2005), and in accordance with the terms used by the young person involved in this research, the term Gypsy-Traveller will be used throughout this report. The term is capitalised to reflect the group's status as an ethnic minority.

that was well used by local Travellers, moved to the local high school when it had become established. The club is run weekly throughout the school year from 5:30 to 7:30pm and open to all young people aged between 9 and 13 years. The club is run by volunteer staff from the school and a young person from within the Gypsy-Traveller community and managed by the school Assistant Head Teacher Inclusion.

Computer access, refreshments and social activities, such as pool and listening to music, are made available every week to the young people. Informal information sessions, on issues such as health and career planning, and more creative activities such as recording music and kite making are offered according to the theme for the term. Themes are determined by the staff's perception of community needs, and established at the beginning of each school term. Through the medium of social activities, teaching staff also aim to develop the young people's skills in curriculum subjects such as art, food technology, and science, and young people have also been able to acquire Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications through the vocational work undertaken at the club. Through their contact with parents, staff also seek to point families towards other agencies, such as health services or Connexions.

The club has provided a vehicle for developing links between the school and the Gypsy-Traveller community. Around 25 young people, predominantly from within the Gypsy-Traveller community, attend the club and parents are also becoming involved. Given the nature of the travelling lifestyle, the attendance of many families is irregular, but a number of families have attended the club since its inception and the school has received a number of enquiries regarding high school places for children from within the Gypsy-Traveller community.

The success of the club has led to a number of other developments in the school's work with the Gypsy-Traveller community: outreach work to local primary schools is underway to encourage younger Gypsy-Traveller children to engage with both the club and secondary education; a Year 7 diversity day took place at the school allowing members of the Gypsy-Traveller community to share other aspects of their culture; and links have been developed with other local authority Traveller Education Teams. These new links have enabled the school to promote its work to a wider audience, and provided the opportunity to invite successful professionals from within the Gypsy-Traveller community to deliver motivational talks to young people at the club. The school has also developed an ASDAN project for Year 9 pupils, led by a male member

of the Gypsy-Traveller community, to restore a gypsy caravan, and there are plans to develop a programme of family learning sessions at the school, covering skills such as internet technology (IT).

The service was able to obtain funding from another source to continue the club when funding from the Cheshire Children's Fund ceased in 2006.

4.2.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

Thomas, now 12 years old, had left school at the age of 9. Following a period of frequent school changes necessitated by the family's travelling, Thomas was experiencing problems with the teachers. His sister perceived that he was very angry at this time, frequently having temper tantrums and she described her brother as hyperactive. Thomas' reading and writing skills were also underdeveloped and he found this frustrating. The local authority was in contact with the family and they informed the family about the project. Thomas' older sister Sarah, now aged 23, was recruited to work with the project as an intermediary between the Gypsy-Traveller community and the school.

Sarah's role initially involved promoting the club within the Gypsy-Traveller community. She reported a sceptical response at the beginning of the project, but said that parents became more responsive to the club when they were given more information and when they heard that someone they knew from the Gypsy-Traveller community would be involved. Once the club was established, Thomas was keen to attend. The club identified a need for Thomas to engage with school and education, to receive career advice and to integrate with the settled community.

4.2.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Sarah was involved in establishing the club and still supports the school staff at the club each week. Her involvement has led to other work opportunities and now that the club is established, she has been able to explore new options. Thomas attends the youth club and his involvement has led to more formal learning within the school.

4.2.2.1 Service development

Sarah was recruited to the club in large part due to her connections with the Gypsy-Traveller community. Initially, she assisted the Education Welfare Officer for Travellers'

Services in establishing the club's location and facilities, and in promoting the club within the Gypsy-Traveller community. Once the club was set up, Sarah worked alongside staff running the activities at the club.

4.2.2.2 Leisure opportunities

Thomas attends the club each week when he is not travelling with his family. The youth club has provided an opportunity for him to mix with others and, significantly, to mix with children from the settled community, an opportunity which, Sarah said, was previously unavailable to young Gypsy-Travellers:

'It's hard coming into a new town when there's still a little bit ... of hostility between both sides ... There is a local community club around, it's just up the back of the high school. I went to it when I first moved here. The helpers are great, but both sides of the kids [the Gypsy-Traveller children and the settled children] were a bit sceptical. We stayed in one room and they stayed in the other. Now it's a totally different thing.'

In addition to the weekly sessions at the internet café or the school, the club has organised a number of excursions for young people such as swimming and go-karting and Thomas has taken part in craft activities, cooking sessions, computer-based activities and science experiments at the club. Sarah reported that he really enjoys the club and takes pride in his sister's position as a worker:

'He does enjoy [the club] and I think it makes it a little bit easier because I'm here as well, and he likes the fact that you know, I'm his sister and he's kind of like, "That's my sister." He likes that, he likes to tell everybody.'

4.2.2.3 One-to-one support

While attending the club, Thomas was introduced to one of the teaching assistants at the school, an introduction facilitated by his sister, Sarah. Thomas was not attending school at this time but being taught at home by his step-father. Sarah and her mother suggested that he might benefit from more formal lessons and Sarah said that she recognised that Thomas would need to establish a relationship with the teaching staff if he were to return to formal education.

Sarah suggested that a positive relationship was established between Thomas and the teaching assistant, which facilitated his decision to undertake part-time lessons at the

school. Thomas now attends one-to-one lessons at the school twice a week, one maths session and one literacy session:

'He kind of knew [the teaching assistant] a lot before, and it has built up a lot of trust with Traveller kids as well, 'cos they see the teachers now and they're not intimidated. They're like, "Hello, I met you from the clubs."'

Sarah reported that her family hope that Thomas will re-enter full-time education soon.

4.2.3 Impact of the service on the family

Sarah perceived that her family's involvement with the project had been of benefit to herself and her brother, particularly in relation to confidence, academic and life skills; she also perceived that their career prospects had been greatly improved.

4.2.3.1 Confidence

Sarah reported that interaction with people from the settled community had improved her confidence. She reported meeting a lot of *'influential people'* through her role at the club, which she described as intimidating, but through the help of the Traveller Education Service, she perceived that she had been able to overcome this. Sarah was emphatic about Thomas' increased confidence. She attributed this to his increased social interaction and his improved literacy skills.

4.2.3.2 Social skills

Thomas had experienced little social contact with his peers outside of school and virtually none since leaving formal education. Sarah perceived that the opportunity for him to mix with others his own age was really important. She also recognised a benefit to his interaction with people from the settled community, which she said had dispelled many of his fears when outside of his own community. Sarah considered that this outcome had been achieved amongst other Gypsy-Traveller children who attended the club:

'It has helped their self-esteem because if they see the settled kids in the club, they will say hello to them, if they see them on the street or something. So I think that's built up on confidence a bit.'

Sarah reported that Thomas had made new friends, many of whom attended the high school: she anticipated that this would facilitate his transition into full-time education.

4.2.3.3 Literacy, maths and computer skills

In order to undertake her role with the club, Sarah had been given the opportunity to improve her literacy and computer skills with the help of a teaching assistant. She was grateful for having had the opportunity to do this, and said that she had made improvements with these skills.

Thomas' reading and writing skills were reported to be vastly improved since he had begun lessons at the school. Thomas' behavioural problems were attributed by his sister to an unmet need for constant stimulation. She perceived that the lessons had answered this need and that his improved literacy skills had impacted on his behaviour at home:

'He can read a lot better, he can write a lot better. He doesn't take a tantrum when he can't do it any more. He's a very hyperactive child so you've got to keep his attention like that. He's just come on in leaps and bounds ... He can sit down and read a book without stuttering and getting aggravated and throwing it sort of thing.'

4.2.3.4 Career opportunities

Following her involvement with the club, Sarah was offered further work with a charitable organisation, developing a website for Gypsy-Traveller communities in England and Wales. She is also actively seeking funding for a project she has initiated to promote young new musical talent within the Gypsy-Traveller community. Having formerly been intimidated by the prospect of working with the settled community, Sarah said that the help and support she had been given to develop her skills, and the encouragement she had received from the professionals involved with the club, had given her the confidence to try new things:

'When I started, you know, I had to learn how to use a laptop, me reading and writing was a little iffy, I've got a bit better ... But to me it's been great in my life. I've met a lot of different people that I never thought I'd do. I've done a lot of things that I didn't think I'd be able to do.'

The success of the club and the benefits for her own community provided the motivation for Sarah to progress within this field of work. She was conscious that her own achievement was an example to other Gypsy-Travellers:

'I've had a lot of Gypsies and Travellers coming up to me and asking me how and why I'm doing it, how did I get into it and can they get into it. You know it's been great in my life.'

Sarah also perceived that Thomas' chances of career success were enhanced by his improved literacy, numeracy and computer skills:

'He's planning on owning his own company ... And with him doing his sessions in the high school he knows how to use a computer, he can read and write; he does maths. It will help him a lot when he [gets] older because you have to be tax registered now and everything. You know he can do his accounts if he wanted probably, which I think will help him a lot when he gets older.'

4.2.4 Summary of outcomes

The outcomes for Sarah and Thomas can be summarised using the *Every Child Matters* framework, as illustrated in Table 4.2.4.1. The outcomes identified by Sarah and the youth club manager were very similar, and corresponded with the shared objectives of improving relations between the school and Gypsy-Traveller community, and encouraging Thomas to re-enter secondary education.

Table 4.2.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcomes	Project activity
Be healthy	Thomas has been involved in physical activities. Thomas has gained an awareness of the benefits of healthy eating through information and cooking activities. Thomas has improved confidence through social interaction and improved literacy and numeracy skills.
Enjoy and achieve	Thomas has improved literacy and numeracy skills. Thomas has started to engage with high school. Thomas has made new friends.
Make a positive contribution	Sarah has helped to build bridges between settled and Gypsy-Traveller communities.
Achieve economic well-being	Sarah is in full-time employment, with further career options open to her. Improved literacy and numeracy skills will increase Thomas' career options.

Sarah and the project staff expressed similar views regarding the impact of the service on the family. There was agreement that Sarah and Thomas had increased in confidence and that they had both developed their numeracy and literacy skills. Sarah and the project staff perceived that the project had been successful in helping Thomas

to engage with the school and that the career prospects for both of the young people were improved.

4.2.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

Engaging the family with the club was the first step to providing support to Gypsy-Traveller families such as Thomas and Sarah's. Sarah identified several key elements of the project which helped to secure this engagement for her own and for other families, including the familiarity of the setting, the Christian association of the original venue for the club, and her own endorsement of the project. The youth club manager and Sarah identified a number of significant factors in Thomas' involvement that led to success.

4.2.5.1 Subtlety of approach

By offering activities that appealed to the Gypsy-Traveller community, in a familiar venue, staff at the club were able to deliver support and guidance to families in a non-threatening way. Sarah and the youth club manager perceived that young people responded well to educational aspects of activities that were geared towards their interests, such as internet access to improve computer literacy, and that information sessions were most successful when delivered informally at the club.

4.2.5.2 Relationship with project staff

Sarah perceived that the relationship established between Thomas and the teaching assistant at the youth club was pivotal to Thomas' decision to attend lessons in school. She perceived that, as with many of the other children at the club, the continuity of the staff input at the youth club and the time dedicated to building relationships between individual staff and the young people attending enabled Thomas to feel comfortable to move on to attend lessons at the school. In Sarah's opinion, the level of funding, which allowed the project to commit 4 years to establish the youth club, encouraged both staff and members of the Gypsy-Traveller community to invest in the project.

4.3 Case study 3 - promoting inclusion (disabled children)

This service has been funded by Cheshire Children's Fund since 2003 when a part-time project worker was employed to facilitate disabled children's access to sport and leisure activities in the Primary Care Trust's area.

The project worker explained that her initial consultation with parents of disabled children suggested that many wanted to start with separate leisure activities for their children, although facilitating the participation of children in mainstream clubs and developing a buddy scheme have now become increasingly important elements of the worker's role.

Following a number of consultation exercises with children, young people and parents, a range of new clubs have been established by the project to provide sporting and other leisure activities. The clubs have been based around activities such as arts and crafts, chess, trampolining, kayaking, horse riding, multi-sports and a youth club. Different activities run during the evening, holiday times or at the weekend and some are open to other family members.

The resources of the project do not allow for individual children to have individual plans but the project worker explained that she promotes each club and passes on information to parents and carers who may be interested in particular types of activities. Parents have also become increasingly involved in running the project's activities and have become part of a management committee.

In the Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan, this service was identified as working primarily towards the *Every Child Matters* outcomes be healthy, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

4.3.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

The case study family contacted this service approximately 3 years ago when Matthew was 7 years old. They had read about the project in a newsletter. Once they had joined one activity, Matthew's mum, Angela, explained that the family's further involvement was facilitated by the personal contact they had with the project worker:

'It was through the Activate magazine, there were different things on and we thought, "Right we'll try that." And then every time I saw [the project worker] she said, "We've got something else up and running, I don't know whether you want to try it?"'

4.3.1.1 Lack of suitable activities

Angela explained that she was interested in finding new activities for her son, Matthew. She described Matthew as a very active child who needed to be constantly occupied. But Angela explained that he could find both unstructured and structured play environments difficult:

'If we go down to the park, generally because he's always been really tall for his age anyway, kids of his own age will look at him and play with him because height-wise they're the same but then when he starts speaking and his speech doesn't match the age that he looks, they kind of look at him and give him a strange look and walk off. And yet the kids that are cognitively on his par are half his size so when he gets a bit rough with them he's in a no-win situation really.'

Angela had found that more structured play opportunities did not necessarily meet the needs of her son. This was illustrated by Matthew's experience at a summer scheme where Angela said that he was not encouraged to get involved in the activities and that he needed to be accompanied by his own key worker in order to be safe:

'I specifically said to [the key worker], "Don't do any [activities] with him because actually, that's what [the summer scheme staff] are getting paid to do. All you're there for is to watch he doesn't run off." And you know, she said they weren't doing stuff with him and they weren't getting him to join in. And I think whilst it's hard to do that, essentially that's what I'm paying them to do.'

4.3.1.2 Provision for working parents

Angela had also found that there was a lack of suitable provision for Matthew that fitted in with her working hours. She expressed this in the following way:

'I think that's what I've found most frustrating, as a working parent I find there's very, very little help, kind of before and after school clubs and the summer clubs. I feel like there's very, very little out there ... as a working parent, in some ways, I feel a bit penalised on that corner that there isn't a lot of that kind of thing going on.'

Angela found the school holidays particularly difficult: she described balancing her own work and keeping her two children entertained as *'just a nightmare.'*

'I think, to be honest I was getting to the stage where I really needed help because I just felt like I was trying to do a job on my own ... I've always been the one that's been off throughout the summer with the children, trying to entertain two kids when you've got you know the likes of Matt who's 10 with a mental age of maybe 6 or 7 and a daughter who's kind of 14 with a mental age of kind of 18. And trying to do activities; it was really hard.'

Angela was looking for something in the summer which met both her needs as a working parent and Matthew's needs as a disabled child:

'I have to say, before we did the activities, the summer was a long stretch. There aren't any summer clubs for children with disabilities, it's really, really rare. The other need is, the likes of me who are working during the holidays, there's no where that you can take children with learning difficulties and drop them. There was a club that I did take him and they said, "You need to stay with him." And I was paying £16 per day.'

As well as looking for something to do during the school holidays, Angela said that she was keen for Matthew to have more regular opportunities to mix with other young people as he grew older. She said that before Matthew started attending the activities, *'he didn't have a social life it was just kind of me and him and Emily.'* Angela said that this was exacerbated by the fact that he did not go to a local school and his friends live *'quite far away.'*

4.3.1.3 Opportunity to try new activities

Angela saw her family's involvement with the service as providing an opportunity for Matthew to experience a range of sport and leisure activities and, as he got older, to start making decisions about what he wanted to do in his spare time:

'I just want him to have more independence really, start being able to think for himself and doing things for himself and finding out what he likes doing and what he wants to do really. Whereas before, I think basically I've just tried to try everything so that then he can find out what he likes doing. And you know if he doesn't like it, then we don't have to go again.'

Angela was also attracted to the service because there were activities which the whole family could get involved in. She said that Matthew's older sister had *'got to miss out on quite a lot of things as well because everything has to be geared around Matthew'* but that there was an opportunity here to do things in a different way.

The project worker described the reason for the service's contact with Matthew and his family as being to increase opportunities for Matthew to be involved in sport and leisure, to increase choice and be able to involve the whole family in activities and to give Matthew the chance to try new sports.

4.3.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Angela was keen that Matthew tried as many different opportunities with the project as the family could. There were activities that the family particularly enjoyed and so they had continued to attend, but they had decided that some of the activities were not right for Matthew at the time, particularly with regard to the level of concentration required, so they had stopped attending:

'His concentration has grown actually, over time, and we should revisit [some activities] and try and go back ... at the beginning I tried everything and there were some things that Matt wasn't, didn't kind of hold his concentration.'

The activities that Matthew and members of his family have accessed through the service include the multi-sports club, the trampoline club, art classes, horse riding, a summer scheme and kayaking.

Matthew spoke about the things that he had done at the multi-sports club. These activities included football, basketball and tennis and it was the first time he had taken part in these sports. Matthew particularly enjoyed the basketball and said that he had made new friends at the club. He had also attended a trampoline club and was very keen on this activity: Matthew spoke about the club and the '*sit down jumps*' that he did on the trampoline. His attendance at this club, however, was problematic as it took place in the early evening and Angela found it difficult to get back from work in time to take him. Although the family have access to Direct Payments and could employ someone to take Matthew, Angela was concerned that this would take too large a proportion of the payment they received if they did this on a regular basis.

Matthew attended an arts and crafts club and he talked about the friends that he has made there. Angela said that this activity had not been easy for her son at first because he found it difficult to concentrate on the activities. She said that this, however, had improved and '*as time's progressed, his concentration's got a little bit better, he can sit for kind of longer periods of time.*'

One club that Matthew had tried but given up was horse riding. Although attendance at this activity was difficult, as the day and time did not really fit in with their routine, Angela also found that the structure of the session did not suit Matthew's personality as there was too much time when they were not riding: Angela illustrated this point by saying that *'our Matt just doesn't do hanging around really.'*

The lack of provision during the summer holidays was an issue for this family. Matthew had attended two different summer schemes and whilst Angela had not been happy with her son's level of involvement in the activities at the first scheme, she said that the one Matthew had attended last summer, organised by the project, was much better:

'I think that worked really, really well. Again it's kids with, they've all got some kind of special needs so they don't see themselves as being any different. They don't stand out from the rest of the crowd. They're not any different from the other kids there and a lot of them know each other from the various clubs. So again I was quite happy to leave him there and he was quite happy to stay and you know most of the time he was quite well behaved really.'

One activity that the whole family had been able to take part in was kayaking. A course ran during the last summer holidays and it was anticipated that another course would run this year. Angela said that she was booking the time off work to make sure that she could go again and that she was particularly pleased that Matthew's sister could join in and had enjoyed this activity, saying that *'both Emily and I have got our one and two star kayaking awards, so it's kind of been a real family thing.'* Matthew also spoke about the activity and described how he *'just kept going in circles.'* He said it was very hard and that someone had to pull him along. He laughed when he talked about capsizing in the canoe, saying *'I did it wrong and went under the water!'*

Although Angela wants Matthew to enjoy physical activities and develop his social networks and sense of independence, at the present time she wants to be with him when he is attending, particularly to ensure that he is encouraged to join in:

'We always stay at the sports club. In the past there have been times when I've kind of left him in the hall and got a cup of coffee. But again I find that unless it's regular people that are helping, until people get to know Matt, I don't want him left to kind of play by himself. I want him to be encouraged and I felt like people always think that they're telling him off if they're kind of mothering, whereas as a parent I just say, "Excuse me, move it, get in there and play." And he goes, "Okay." So it's just knowing how to deal with him really.'

4.3.3 Impact of the service

The breadth of reasons for this family becoming involved with the service is reflected in the way that both Angela and the service provider describe the impact that it has had on different members of the family.

4.3.3.1 Leisure opportunities

Both Angela and the service provider said that one of the objectives of the involvement of this family was for Matthew to have increased opportunity to be involved in sport and leisure activities. Angela was particularly keen that Matthew should be able to try new things so that he could see which he enjoyed and would like to continue to attend. Angela suggested that the family's involvement with this service had enabled him to do this.

Angela said that Matthew had always been active and that these clubs, like the kayaking, have provided the opportunity for him to try different things and enjoy himself in a safe environment:

'Matt hasn't even got his Level 1, he's not bothered about the certificate, he just wants to go, splash and have fun. And its just for a while we were like, you know, "Matt get out of the water", and in the end I just said, "Put a life jacket on him, I'm sick to death of hearing the sound of my own voice." And I think well, what harm is he doing? You know, he's not doing any harm, he's having fun and if that's the way he wants to have fun, then just let him get on with it.'

4.3.3.2 Personal and social skills

Angela suggested that through experiences such as the trampolining club and the kayaking, Matthew is learning essential life skills about taking risks and staying safe. She considered that Matthew's personal skills had developed as a result of his involvement in the activities provided by the project and these changes were having an impact on a number of different areas of his life. She spoke, in particular, about his social skills and the fact that he was now better able to concentrate on a given activity.

Matthew's involvement in a variety of activities has provided a range of social opportunities outside the school environment and, although some of the children at the activities are from his school, he also talked about the new friends he had made. Angela said that she thought that his participation in a range of activities had provided

new experiences and environments that would help Matthew to develop his social skills:

'I think given the opportunity, Matt wouldn't be as sociable as he is. And with the sports there was a period of time when he would just go and get a football and play by himself. And it was only that I used to force him to say we're here to be with other kids, you can play by yourself at home for however many hours ... And again with the kayaking its about team work, you have to work together whereas I think lots of times Matt's used to having one-to-one attention so he's used to only thinking about himself. Whereas with groups like this he's having to think about other people, he's having to think about how he interacts with them, how his mood makes other people feel. So certainly for me, it's more the social and how to behave with other people and what's acceptable and what's not acceptable.'

Angela explained that Matthew has found it easier to make friends at the clubs than in other more informal situations and consequently, his involvement had been a great boost to his social life. Angela considered that these developments in Matthew's life outside school are also having an impact in the classroom and in social situations at school:

'I think socially being able to interact with other people helps him learn to then be able to do it in school. And because there are children from school that go to the clubs even though they're not in his class then when they do ... have school discos and school activities then he's able to be more sociable. And he's got things to talk about as well, "Remember when we did this in sports, we did whatever" or, "Remember at kayaking when we did ..." So ... although the children aren't in his class, he has things that he can relate to with them.'

Angela said that she felt that Matthew's positive response to the research interview was also an illustration of the difference that his involvement with new people and new situations through the project had had on his ability to cope with other social settings. She said that in the past he would have avoided conversations with strangers or would have said very little.

Angela said Matthew's concentration levels had also improved, and combined with his increased social awareness, Angela suggested that he may be able to retry activities, such as football, that he had previously found difficult to get involved in.

4.3.3.3 Networking

Angela has found that one of the benefits of Matthew attending the leisure activities has been the access it has given her to other parents of disabled children. She said

that through this networking she had come across some useful information about respite care and Direct Payments, for example, and it had also given her a sense of well-being to be able to talk to other parents who can empathise or offer support. She also found it a positive experience to be with other parents who were more accepting of Matthew's behaviour:

'For me ... its just nice to know that other families are going through the same thing ... [it's] helped me to relax because I wasn't thinking all the other parents are waiting for Matthew to maybe have a tantrum or do something naughty. And the things that maybe parents that have got kind of mainstream kids, they see things that are naughty and for us it's kind of every day life. So there's none of that pre-judgement.'

She also suggested that the parents provide a source of support for one another and envisaged that this could be useful as their children got older. The parents had already spoken about the possibility of organising a rota between themselves to 'keep an eye' on each other's children when they started attending the youth club.

4.3.3.4 Involving all members of the family

The ability of the service to provide access to leisure activities that could be enjoyed by the whole family was an important element of this provision. Angela said that the project provided a good way for them to do things that they all enjoy as a family and that Matthew's sister, Emily, had experienced a sense of achievement by taking part in activities such as kayaking and reaching the Level 2 award. As Angela explained, the way the activity was run had also been a positive experience for Matthew's sister:

'Lots of the activities we've been able to do have challenged us all on different levels which has been really good ... Emily isn't that active, she's not as active as Matthew, so it's encouraged her to be a little bit more active. And also as siblings, rather than there being the kind of fighting and her being jealous, they were able to do stuff together. I think especially with the kayaking, she's been able to progress higher than Matthew, which has given her a sense of achievement, and other people have given her the one-to-one attention that she kind of craves. And now you know she's quite proud that she's got that achievement.'

Angela also said that the wider family involvement may have provided Emily with a new perspective on her own family's situation:

'She's definitely been blessed to see that there's other kids out there that are worse off, there's other families that are worse off, lots worse off than us whereas sometimes she'd be feeling kind of really low about herself and Matthew gets all the attention and everything's about Matthew. And when she'd see other kids she'd think, well, actually, there's other families out there that are in the same boat or even worse and as a family they just all pull together, everybody helps everybody.'

4.3.3.5 Childcare

As a working parent, Angela had found the lack of suitable provision for her son during the school holidays to be a particular problem. She said that she had always worried about what she would do with Matthew and how she would cope during the summer but that the activities she had been able to access through the project during the school holidays had increased the options that were available to them.

4.3.4 Summary of outcomes

The family's involvement with the project did increase opportunities for Matthew to be involved in a range of new sport and leisure activities which Angela perceived as being suitable for her son and provided an environment with which she was comfortable. Activities were also available that allowed the whole family to participate and some provision was available during the school holidays.

Their involvement with the project has resulted in a number of outcomes for Matthew and his family which fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework. These were identified by staff at the project, by Matthew and by Angela and are illustrated in Table 4.3.4.1.

In considering the views expressed by project staff and the family about the impact of the project, there was agreement that Matthew had been given new social and leisure opportunities. The family and the project also agreed that the whole family had benefited from the activities. Angela was, however, more explicit about the social skills that Matthew had developed and perceived that the activities had provided her with the opportunity to network with other parents. She also appreciated the childcare afforded by some of the activities.

Table 1.3.4.1 ***Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities**

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Matthew has increased opportunities to be involved in physical activities.
Stay safe	All activities Matthew undertakes are conducted in a safe environment.
Enjoy and achieve	Matthew has been able to enjoy new sports. Matthew has met new people and made new friends. The family have been able to do things together and Matthew's sister has been able to take part in new activities.
Make a positive contribution	Matthew has increased confidence in social situations and at school.
Achieve economic well-being	Activities during the summer made it easier for Angela to continue to work. Angela has more information about benefits and services through networking with other parents.

4.3.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors that were identified that had allowed this service meet the needs of this family particularly well.

4.3.5.1 Activities available

The project has been able to offer a range of sporting and leisure activities and Angela was keen that Matthew, who she described as an active child, had things to do. Angela has been keen for Matthew to try different things so that they could decide which activities he particularly enjoyed and wants to continue to attend.

4.3.5.2 Relationship with project staff

Angela appears to have a particular attitude of giving things a try and she considered that the good relationship her family had built up with the project worker meant that this was recognised and they were kept up to date with any new developments.

4.3.5.3 Project longevity

The family has been involved with the project's activities for 3 years and Angela has developed confidence in the activities that are provided and her ability to access them.

She has been able to try and then leave activities if she felt it was not the right thing for her son or if it did not fit in with their routine, and appreciates the fact that there will be new opportunities for Matthew, such as the youth club, as he gets older. Angela also talked about the development of supportive relationships with other parents of disabled children and suggested that they may be able to help each other as their children get older and move on to new activities.

4.3.5.4 School holiday provision

One of Angela's concerns was that, as a working parent, she did not have access to appropriate provision for Matthew during the school holidays. Angela had been able to access summer activities provided through the project, confident that they would meet the needs of her child.

4.3.5.5 Opportunities for the whole family

The access to activities such as kayaking and camping that could be enjoyed by the whole family was an important feature of the project for this family. Angela spoke about the impact that meeting other families had had on her daughter and about what they had all gained from their participation in the kayaking in particular.

4.4 Case study 4 - promoting inclusion (disabled children)

Cheshire Children's Fund has funded a post since 2003 to develop leisure opportunities for disabled children in the area to the east of the county. This project aimed to improve opportunities for local children to attend both separate and mainstream activities; a small grants awards scheme was set up to allocate funds to leisure facility providers and groups to improve the accessibility of their services and promote an agenda of inclusion.

The project worker made contact with families through pre-existing statutory and voluntary organisations to determine the needs of local disabled children and their families. One-off activity days were organised to promote the work of the project, but following this, work was concentrated on directing disabled children into existing leisure groups and services. The project sought to co-ordinate the work between statutory organisations and existing voluntary organisations to ensure that obstacles to inclusion for disabled children were overcome. A project identity was established and

relationships were developed with leisure providers and individual families to encourage support and ensure the long term viability of the project once Cheshire Children's Fund funding ceased.

The primary *Every Child Matters* outcomes the project works towards are enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005), although the project worker suggested that the achievement of these outcomes inevitably involved the utilisation of all five of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

4.4.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

The family were first made aware of the project via a flyer that had been distributed at Jessica's school. The project appealed to Jessica's mum, Carole, as she wanted to access an after school club that could meet the needs of her daughter who is now 12 years old.

Carole had previously tried unsuccessfully to gain a place for Jessica in an after school club close to her school. Although discussions about how Jessica could be accommodated had taken place over an extended period, the specialist equipment and facilities that would enable Jessica to attend could not be provided. Carole described a similarly negative experience at summer holiday activity clubs, where there was usually insufficient staffing to provide the one-to-one support that Jessica required. Carole said:

'I just ended up not going. I think maybe I sound negative. I think you do one or two of these things over the years and then in the end I don't like banging my head against a brick wall.'

Carole perceived that Jessica needed the stimulation of contact with other children her own age, closer to home, as she considered that it was important for Jessica to have friends in her local area so they were keen to take up the service when it was offered:

'Because I'd had to overcome my own barriers [with the previous after school club], this was just wonderful that here was a scheme saying that it was going to do all that. So we obviously very much wanted to become a part of it.'

This particular project appealed to Carole as she perceived that the level of funding available increased the likelihood of achieving integration into a mainstream club for Jessica.

4.4.2 Nature of the family's involvement

The project provided funding and assistance that enabled Jessica to attend a mainstream after school club. The key elements of the support were the funding for equipment, one-to-one support, and co-ordination of arrangements for Jessica to attend the club. The project worker enlisted the help of a bridging worker, funded by the county council, to undertake a large part of the liaison between the family, the school and other organisations, such as equipment specialists and the local authority.

4.4.2.1 The bridging worker

After seeing the advert for the project, Carole made contact with the project worker who initiated a meeting between Carole, Jessica, a bridging worker, and herself. Carole made some enquiries to find after school clubs in her locality and through liaison with the project worker arranged a visit to one of them. Once a relationship had been established with the bridging worker, the project worker stepped back and allowed her to assist the family with the process of securing a suitable place for Jessica.

There were several obstacles that the family had to face, such as delays arranging the installation of specialist equipment at the club premises. Carole felt that the support of the bridging worker was essential in helping to make progress. This support relieved Carole's frustration and anxiety:

'The bridging worker kept things quite calm because I really, at times, did feel that I was going to go off on the deep end and shout and get cross, because of sheer frustration but she was ever the professional and kept more of a professional sort of aspect of it all and would intervene.'

Carole was impressed with the extent of the changes the project was able to effect to enable Jessica to attend the club; this included a review of the local authority's transport policy to ensure that the transport provided to take Jessica to and from school could be used to take her to the after school club.

4.4.2.2 Funding

Carole was impressed by the extent of the funding available to meet all of Jessica's needs. Arrangements, for example, were made for the installation of a changing table and hoist at the club. Carole commented:

'I didn't realise just how good the scheme was as far as funding, which is really unusual because it's ... usually the other way, it's invariably: you hear of all these things and then sadly the one thing that's missing is the funding. And I was staggered and continue to be staggered to find that all these things are so positive and the funding is there as well. It is quite amazing and very, very positive.'

The project also provided funding for a support worker for Jessica when she was at the club.

4.4.2.3 The after school club

One-to-one support at the club has enabled Jessica to take part in all of the activities on offer. Jessica needs assistance to move her wheelchair and Carole perceived that the enthusiasm of the support worker has ensured that Jessica is included in all activities. Carole also praised the staff and the other children at the club for their readiness to accept Jessica as part of the club and Jessica has taken part in football, craft activities, picnics and singing. Carole considered that Jessica was fully integrated into the club:

'The other day she was with the girls and they all had a [pretend] picnic and apparently they were piling all, you know plastic pieces of cake and plastic sandwiches on Jessica's knee sharing their picnic. So she's just, she's just with them doing whatever the activity.'

4.4.3 The impact of the service

The main impact of involvement with the service, as perceived by the project worker and the family, was the development of social opportunities for Jessica. Attendance at the club allowed Jessica a degree of independence from her family, which was also of benefit to Carole.

4.4.3.1 Social interaction

Carole was pleased at the opportunity that the club afforded Jessica to engage with other children. Although Carole was satisfied with Jessica's attendance at a special school, she felt that interaction with non-disabled children meant that Jessica had access to a different kind of social interaction. Carole perceived that verbal interaction was a significant benefit of socialising at the club, as well as the opportunity for Jessica to be integrated in what Carole termed *'the real world'* as opposed to the more sheltered environment of her school:

'I think that [verbal communication at the club] is crucial because in her class at school none of the children communicate verbally. So the only voices she hears is teachers or support workers. So in that environment, in the after school club, she's actually hearing other children.'

Similarly, as Jessica has no siblings, Carole felt that it was important she was given the opportunity to make friends locally. The opportunity to see friends when closer to home was very important to Carole. Carole perceived that these friendships were of benefit to Jessica's well-being:

'She's made friendships, be it that they're not in the conventional way that perhaps other people might view friendships, but the fact that there are a certain group of girls that really look out for Jessica when she's there. Two of them were trying to help strap her wheelchair into my car, and just like I say bringing her things because she can't go and get a toy or go and get whatever. I think that's had a tremendous, tremendous effect on Jessica.'

Carole appreciated the opportunity for natural engagement with peers that Jessica had been given. She cited an encounter at the local leisure centre with a group of girls from the club who had been enthusiastic to see Jessica. Carole perceived that the attitudes of the staff at the club and the eagerness of Jessica's support worker to help her engage with others at the club had facilitated natural interaction between Jessica and the other children there.

4.4.3.2 Age appropriate activities

Carole said that the club offered an opportunity for Jessica to engage in activities that she otherwise might not experience. The absence of contact with siblings at home limited the range of activities that Jessica undertook. The club offered stimulation for Jessica and she was included in all of the activities including football, computer games, free play and crafts. Carole particularly appreciated the opportunity for her daughter to engage in activities such as team games and races:

'I actually got there one day to pick her up and I could hear her screaming with joy as she was being pushed at a very fast rate of knots across the school yard!'

4.4.3.3 Independence

Before she went to the after school club, Jessica's leisure time had been restricted to activities with her mum. Carole was eager that Jessica obtain a degree of

independence from her which she felt the club offered. While Carole perceived that Jessica's independence was limited given her dependence on her support worker, she felt it was important that Jessica took part in an activity without her mother's presence, affording greater freedom for Jessica.

4.4.3.4 Parent's well-being

The safe environment of the club and the development of a strong relationship with the support worker gave Carole a sense of security in Jessica's well-being whilst she was at the club. Carole also perceived that she benefited from the knowledge that Jessica was enjoying herself and being given new opportunities:

'And I just think that if she could speak that she would tell us that that made her feel good. And it certainly, very selfishly, makes me feel good.'

The bridging worker also considered that the after school club had afforded valuable respite for Carole, who as a single parent, is Jessica's sole carer.

4.4.4 Summary of outcomes

The key outcome for Jessica has been the opportunity to socialise with other children, as per the agency and family objective. This, and other outcomes identified by the project worker and Carole are illustrated in Table 4.4.4.1 within the *Every Child Matters* framework.

Table 4.4.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Jessica's emotional well-being has improved.
Stay safe	Jessica has developed social skills in a safe environment.
Enjoy and achieve	Jessica has made friends and taken part in a range of social activities.

In looking at the similarities and discrepancies in the views expressed by the project staff and the family about the difference that the service had made, the project and the family agreed that Jessica had been given new social opportunities that were beneficial to her well-being. The project staff perceived that this had afforded respite for Carole.

Carole interpreted the benefit to herself in a different way, reporting that the independence the club afforded Jessica gave her pleasure and increased her own sense of well-being through Jessica's enjoyment.

4.4.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

Jessica's mum had anticipated the benefits that an after school club would offer, but had previously been unable to arrange a place for her. Carole perceived that the availability of funding from this project had been key to securing Jessica a place at an after school club and supporting her whilst she was there. She also cited the involvement of a dedicated bridging worker as important to ensuring Jessica could attend.

4.4.5.1 Availability of funding

Jessica's support needs previously appeared to have been considered to be too expensive to be met in an after school club setting. Carole perceived the level of long-term funding available with this project as radically different from other projects she had encountered. While it took some time to make adaptations to the venue of the club, this was the first time that Carole had experienced a project that seemed to invest in all of the necessary equipment for Jessica. There was also funding available for a support worker for Jessica at the club, which had allowed her to attend and participate in activities independent of her mum.

4.4.5.2 Co-ordinated approach to support

Carole perceived that the professional intervention of the bridging worker facilitated the process of getting the equipment and support that Jessica needed at the club. The persistence of the project staff in challenging barriers to Jessica's attendance at the after school club, such as the transport policy of the local authority, ensured that significant changes were made to accommodate Jessica's needs. For Carole, having someone to liaise with businesses and organisations on her behalf relieved much of the anxiety and frustration of the process.

4.4.5.3 Relationship with project staff

The bridging worker was able to gain Carole's trust by proving her competency in championing Jessica's needs. This allowed an effective working relationship between

Carole and the bridging worker. Carole had a great deal of knowledge regarding Jessica's needs and potential barriers to her engagement with a club, both from her past experiences and her own investigations, which the bridging worker utilised where appropriate. Similarly, Carole felt confident enough to be able to allow the bridging worker to negotiate arrangements on her behalf when a professional approach was needed.

4.5 Case study 5 - promoting inclusion (participation)

This service has a long history of conducting consultation exercises with children over 13 years old, but identified a need to engage younger children in consultation. The Cheshire Children's Fund funded a project worker from 2003 to develop this element of the service – the project has since been supplemented by additional funding from Children in Need.

The experience of the service suggested that consultation exercises are most effective when young people are given a specific issue to address and so local authorities and schools within the project's target area were contacted to identify issues relevant to children and young people in their locality. Some exercises will start with a specific topic, such as exploring local environmental issues, whilst others are determined by the preferences and priorities of the young people recruited to the project. Issues that have been considered by the consultation projects include safety, local play provision, bullying and library use.

Young people are usually recruited to a consultation project through local schools. The usual format is for a project to last approximately 3 months, initially with weekly meetings but often leading to more sessions as the project completion date approaches. Some projects, which require more intensive work, may be of shorter duration. Most of the consultation work funded through the Children's Fund project has been conducted with children between 8 and 10 years old.

At the start of a consultation exercise, the workers will speak to each child individually to talk about what they want to get out of their involvement, and throughout the project their personal achievements will be recorded. Children are given the opportunity to gain accreditation awards such as Youth Challenge, Youth Achievement and Young Citizen, for their achievements.

In their consultation work with young people, the service has prioritised the *Every Child Matters* outcomes of enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The project workers considered that other *Every Child Matters* outcomes are relevant to specific consultation projects that the children have undertaken.

4.5.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

Harry, who is now 12 years old, was selected by his class teacher to be involved with a consultation project that the service was carrying out in his primary school: he was then in Year 5. His mother, Joanne, was initially uncertain as to the reasons for Harry's selection. Although supportive of his involvement, Joanne thought that children had been selected because of an issue at home, and, in Harry's case, she suspected it was because she was a teenager when he was born. Letters were sent home explaining the project objectives to parents and Joanne followed this up with Harry's class teacher, who informed her that Harry had been chosen because it was anticipated that he could develop social skills and confidence through the project.

Prior to his involvement in the consultation project, Harry had a limited social life outside school and he preferred to spend his free time on his computer at home. Harry's mother said that he was not a particularly confident child and had also, in the past, experienced bullying at school.

Harry's school had been identified for inclusion in the project as a result of the levels of social deprivation in the surrounding area. The project aimed to raise awareness within the community of children's issues and concerns about their local area. The service also aimed to improve links between young people and the local authority and to tackle some of the issues that were raised by young people.

There were a number of objectives set for all of the children on the projects with which Harry was involved. It was anticipated that involvement would help to give young people a voice in their local community, help them gain information and understanding about their local community and develop strategies for overcoming problems that they might face.

4.5.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Harry has been involved with three different consultation projects with the service and hoped to be involved in activities organised in his area in the future. The nature of the projects differed in terms of their subject focus, but all involved consultation with other young people and people in authority. Two of the projects were conducted on the school premises during school hours whilst the third was completed during the school holidays in a local community centre.

4.5.2.1 Getting involved and team building

Although the children's participation in the projects was voluntary, Harry had initially anticipated that it would not be fun as it might involve the service *'droning on about all sorts of stuff'* and that it would be just like school.

Harry's expectations, however, were quickly dispelled. He said that *'after the first day, I started to really, really like it.'* At the start of this project, the children were encouraged to get to know one another. Four children had been selected from each year group, meaning that some of the participants were unknown to Harry. Activities were organised, such as games with rewards, and children were provided with sandwiches so that they could eat lunch together and get to know each other. Harry said:

'We did loads of activities, like we had a load of fun before it started getting serious about the work.'

At the beginning of the second project, a day of team building activities took place in a large forest in the local area. Children were asked to build a den out of materials in the forest, a challenge Harry particularly enjoyed and considered to have been successfully completed.

Harry appreciated the way that the service rewarded them for their hard work at the end of a project. He had taken part in excursions such as bowling, eating out, and a trip to a local theme park. Harry said that he had *'had a lot of treats from [the service].'*

4.5.2.2 Working with other children

The focus of the first consultation project that Harry was involved in was to explore issues faced by children in the local area. The children were asked to raise positive and negative issues about where they lived. Photographs were used to instigate

discussion, and children were given the opportunity to take their own pictures to document events and issues in their school and local area.

Harry said that he encountered no difficulty in expressing his opinions at these sessions. He also considered that others were *'eager to put their views'* across. He perceived that the positive way that the groups operated and the fact that people were keen to get involved was facilitated by the format the project worker established for the discussion:

[The project worker] *got us to take it in turns, [she] said, "One person at a time please, we don't want to talk over anyone else and if one person wants to really make their point and you all think it's funny, don't laugh because it might hurt their feelings."*

Individuals within the group raised different topics of concern. Harry identified the domination of a potential play area by drug users as a problem, while others identified graffiti and litter as problems within the area. Children were asked to present their ideas on a jigsaw piece that was shaped to fit together with the pieces of other children in the group.

Another consultation project that Harry took part in focussed on the issues faced by children experiencing difficulties. Harry described the project as being about people who *'have got problems ... sometimes they hit the bottom and take drugs. And they really need help.'* The group was given the opportunity to explore and discuss the support available for children experiencing problems.

Harry classed this project as his favourite one to date. The project worker reported that Harry had assumed a leadership role by this time and Harry himself expressed a sense of confidence in what he was doing and in his belonging to the group:

'There was this girl that [the project worker] chose to come on [the project] with us but she'd never been in many projects so she didn't know what we were doing and we all started telling about what we'd been doing.'

4.5.2.3 Communication with officials

The consultation on local issues culminated in a presentation to local council members, the mayor, and the local press. Harry said that he was surprised at the number of council members who attended the presentation and that he had not anticipated such a positive response to the work that they had undertaken:

'I thought they wouldn't listen to some little kids like us. But they really did listen, and in the end the mayor said he would look at all our views and he'd improve them. And everything that should be done, he'd do.'

Each young person involved in the project delivered a section of the presentation, using the jigsaw to illustrate their points. Harry was immensely proud of the poster of jigsaw pieces that the group had produced; his was still displayed in his kitchen at home, almost a year after the event. The children were also pictured in the local press. Harry perceived that following the presentation, changes were made in the local area; he said that *'after that, things got better.'* His mum agreed that improvements were made:

'They put the swings back up because you took it to the mayor didn't you, the pictures and the presentation, and then the swings got put on and ... more bins up the avenue where the rubbish was. They sent people cleaning up there first thing in the morning.'

The area identified by Harry as in need of cleaning up was also improved. Joanne reported that police patrols had also been increased, leading to increased use of the area by families and dog walkers.

A third project with which Harry was involved was a short consultation exercise to explore young people's perceptions of a website for a web-based counselling service. The children were given access to the website and asked to give feedback on the website's design and facilities. Although Harry was not sure about the outcome of this piece of work, the project worker confirmed that the feedback from the young people was taken to the website's designers.

4.5.3 Impact of the service on the family

Harry benefited from the project in a number of ways which were articulated by Harry himself, his mum and the project staff.

4.5.3.1 Confidence

From the project worker's perspective, Harry's contribution to the consultation projects increased over time. The worker suggested that this was due to an increase in confidence:

'He has grown in self-confidence. I have seen Harry's personal development throughout the project from quite a shy person [to someone taking] a leading role in the group.'

Joanne also suggested that Harry's confidence had increased and that this had led to greater participation in both school and sporting activities. She said that *'he started getting picked more'* for activities at school after his involvement with the project.

Joanne considered that this confidence had translated into assertiveness, which she perceived Harry was showing at home, at school and amongst his peers:

'If something had happened in the street, he'd speak out about it. And I think he knows more about right or wrong, because sometimes kids think it's wrong, but they won't open their mouths and say because of peer pressure, whereas now, there's nothing to worry about because you've got all the support in the world if you don't agree.'

4.5.3.2 Social interaction

Joanne suggested that Harry had become much more sociable since his involvement with the project. She considered that his interest in computers had previously restricted his social life but that things had now changed:

'Harry was very much a recluse but then he started wanting to go out because they've got an all weather pitch at the school and he used to stay behind and play football and things afterwards.'

Harry agreed that since he had taken part in the consultation projects, he had *'been getting much more involved in all sorts of stuff'* at school. He also said that other people in his group had become increasingly sociable through involvement in the project:

'The second one [consultation project] got me up and socialising, it got many people up on socialising in the group because many people in the group were so shy. On the first time, hardly anyone came forward with their views.'

Joanne reported that Harry's new found social life made her slightly anxious at first, but once the family had established ground rules about his playing out with friends she felt more comfortable:

'You [Harry] wouldn't have been the same, you [Harry] wouldn't have been as social, I mean he started senior school last week and he was like, "Can I go out?" And I'm like, "Erm..." and his dad's going, "You've got to let him go."'

Harry's new eagerness to socialise appeared to be born of his new found self-confidence. He also said that he had made new friends from his school year whilst working on the projects. Joanne also perceived that Harry's health was benefiting as his increased enthusiasm for going out with friends had made him more active:

'Well, like I said, with him staying in all the time, he's out more and now that he's joined the high school he's doing more exercise and things like that which he never did much before.'

4.5.3.3 Interest in a range of issues

Harry considered that his involvement with the consultation projects had given him a greater awareness of issues in his locality, and, in particular, issues affecting children and young people. He talked about the changes achieved in his area with pride and reported that it made him feel happy to have played a part in these changes. Harry went on to say that he had noticed that some of the problems that had been tackled in his locality, such as graffiti, had returned over time, suggesting that he had developed a long term interest in his area:

'The first one [consultation project] helped me recognise what [the service] is, and what they do and look properly at what's happening around the town.'

From the way that Harry spoke, it is possible to see that he had developed a sense of empathy from the work he had undertaken. He said that one project in particular *'made me understand people's problems more. Drugs and stuff ... made me feel what kids feel like.'* Following this piece of work, Joanne had allowed Harry to use the website he had learned about through the project to contact other young people as Harry explained:

'[I read a web] post about some kid and replied to their question about drugs because I read the drugs section, not like I need to but I'm just trying to help other kids. Then I went back onto it and he said, "Thanks, I'll try and contact the squad that deals with drugs."'

His mum also perceived that Harry's interest had been stimulated by the topics that had been raised and caused him to consider other things in a new light. She referred to a conversation she and Harry had when he returned from one of the sessions during one consultation project:

'He kept coming home and asking questions, because I was only 16 when I had Harry and then one day he came home and said, "It must have been pretty hard for you", and beforehand I don't think he got the concept of how hard it was ... There's some kids on that website that have obviously gone through the same thing.'

Harry valued his involvement with the service, suggesting an understanding and appreciation of what the consultation projects had afforded. He commented:

'If my teacher didn't involve me into the project itself and [the service] hadn't have done it, I would have missed it all.'

4.5.4 Summary of outcomes

The objectives for Harry's involvement identified by the class teacher were achieved, which had a big impact on Harry's daily life. The service objectives were also met, as Harry made a positive contribution towards the community as well as to his own development. The outcomes for Harry can be placed within the *Every Child Matters* framework as Table 4.5.4.1 illustrates:

Table 4.5.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Harry's improved social life has led to improved well-being and involvement in physical activity.
Enjoy and achieve	Harry received recognition for his contribution to the project from the school and beyond. Harry is engaged in more activities at school and outside school. Harry made new friends on the projects.
Make a positive contribution	Harry has increased self-confidence and assertiveness. Harry contributed to the leadership of the group. Harry had an impact on issues affecting his local community.

The family and the project worker held similar views regarding Harry's achievements with the service. Joanne and Harry were in agreement with the project worker that Harry had developed in confidence and assertiveness as a result of involvement with the consultation projects; there was also agreement that Harry had become more sociable, enabling him to make new friends. The family and the project worker perceived that the range of issues discussed on the project had given Harry a greater

understanding of some of the social issues in his area and, in particular, some of the problems affecting children and young people. The family also perceived that Harry's increased sociability had encouraged him to be more active and play outdoors.

4.5.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors that contributed to Harry's success with the project.

4.5.5.1 Project longevity

The opportunity to participate in a number of projects, over a period of a year, allowed the children to develop a group identity. In familiar settings, surrounded by the same children and with clear ground rules for participation that supported interaction, Harry also developed self-confidence and self-assurance. The longevity of the project enabled the group to see that changes had taken place in their local environment, which gave them additional confidence in their abilities.

4.5.5.2 Relationship with project staff

Over the course of the consultation projects, Harry developed a positive relationship with the project worker: this was conveyed during the research interview by the way that he generally spoke about her, and specifically when he praised the way in which she ran the groups.

The family perceived that the project worker's appreciation of Harry's involvement was also demonstrated in a very clear way: Harry reported with pride that the project worker had sent him Christmas and birthday cards through the post and his mum explained that the worker had also invited Harry to contribute to a forthcoming book about the work of the organisation. Although she did not know the project worker well, Joanne said that she also wanted to convey her appreciation of Harry's involvement to the project worker, at one point writing to her to let he know that they '*have noticed the difference in him and how it's done him some good.*'

The encouragement of the project worker and the regard that Harry felt that she had for his involvement meant that he perceived that he was valued in the work he was doing and in the contribution he was making both to the consultation project and to his local community.

4.6 Case study 6 - success in school (learning mentors)

This service was funded by Cheshire Children's Fund between 2003 and 2006, although it is now part of the Government's Excellence in Cities programme. Learning mentors, who are based within individual schools, are employed by the service to work with children and young people who have identified social, emotional and/or behavioural needs. Mentors use a range of methods to deliver their service, including one-to-one work, small groups, play therapy and work with parents. The aims of the service are: to remove barriers to the school curriculum, to create curriculum opportunities that will assist young people in later life and to extend school provision for young people and their families.

Referrals to the service are usually made by class teachers but they can also be made by other agencies, parents or the children/young people themselves. A referral form is completed and, once accepted by the senior management team within the school, the learning mentor will undertake classroom observations, meet with the child and parent and create an action plan. A review of each case takes place every six weeks.

In the Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan, this service identifies itself as working primarily towards three *Every Child Matters* outcomes; enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

4.6.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

A pattern of absence from school became apparent soon after Jack started his reception year. Jack, now 6 years old, was the oldest of three siblings and the education authority was keen that the low level of school attendance that had been present in at least two generations of his family (Jack's mum, Caroline; her sisters; and her sisters' children) was not repeated.

Although educational welfare officers were involved with other members of the family to enforce school attendance, there was another option available with this branch of the family as there was a learning mentor working within Jack's school. The learning mentor was in a position to address Jack's poor attendance before it became entrenched and, as the project worker explained, to make '*more friendly moves*' to get him to school on a regular basis.

Caroline recalled that the family came into contact with the learning mentor service soon after Jack had started school. She was finding it generally difficult to manage Jack's behaviour but this was particularly so in the morning when it was time to get ready for school. Caroline explained that she was *'having trouble with Jack going school ... he had so much time off 'cos I couldn't get him here ... he were crying and kicking off and wouldn't get dressed and hitting me so he didn't have to come to school.'* She said that Jack *'didn't want to come to school.'*

The learning mentor reported that Jack's mum did not have a positive experience at school herself. Caroline also talked about the fact that she was often absent from school and that there was nothing like the learning mentor project available when she was a child to help her family – she said *'I never went to school, we never had nowt like this when I were younger.'*

The stated aims of the learning mentor service when they became involved with the family were, therefore, to increase Jack's school attendance, to increase Caroline's level of confidence and to develop in the family a greater understanding of the importance of school and their children's regular attendance.

4.6.2 Nature of the family's involvement

A number of different aspects of the services were to be utilised by this family. Action plans for Jack have encompassed activities for either Jack or his parents on a one-to-one basis with the learning mentor and work with the learning mentor as a family group. The service has also facilitated access for the whole family to activities which take place at the school, which they attend without the mentor.

4.6.2.1 Practical help

The first step for the learning mentor and the family was to ensure that Jack attended school. It was agreed that if, on a particular day, Caroline perceived that she was going to struggle to get Jack to school, she could contact the learning mentor who would come to the house, if necessary, to help to get Jack ready. Caroline explained that:

'Julie arranged to come to the house and helped me to get him ready and bring him to school ... or I'd say, "I'm alright", you know, like today, and she would come if I needed, you know, to ring her.'

It was also recognised by the service that the learning mentor needed, at the same time, to increase the level of contact that Caroline had with the school and whilst doing so, increase Caroline's level of confidence in the school so that she was happy for her children to attend. After a period of time, Caroline became more able to get Jack to school without the help of the learning mentor but the learning mentor still met her at the school reception each day and took Jack into class in order to maintain a level of contact with the family.

As part of her contact with Caroline, the learning mentor has been able to pass on practical advice and support to help Caroline manage Jack's behaviour at home. When he started school, Jack's parents thought that he might suffer from ADHD because his behaviour was so difficult but further investigations have suggested that this is not the case and that he would benefit from clearer discipline at home:

'What she done with me is ... behaviour charts and house rules, she done all that with me and that helped.'

4.6.2.2 Personal support

The relationship between the learning mentor and the family has developed in such a way that the learning mentor is seen by both Jack and his parents as someone at the school who can be relied upon and is there for them. Caroline suggested that the learning mentor is a source of personal support for Jack in school:

'Cos now when he cries at school he goes to Julie and Julie you know helps you, don't you ... when he gets upset he asks for Miss Jones ... And he goes to her then most of the time.'

The learning mentor is also a continuing source of support for Caroline and they have contact with each other every day at school. Although Caroline said that she needs less support than she did, she appreciated being able to talk to the learning mentor if she wanted to:

'It was a good, you know, help like that [to know there is someone there]. And I still have a coffee sometimes with her and she sits and talks you know if I've got any problems ... We still do it now if I've got a problem or owt. She'll say, you know, "You don't look well Caz, pop in."'

Jack also has one-to-one sessions with the learning mentor a number of times each week to help his progress in literacy and numeracy. Jack described these sessions as

times when he *'plays games'* with the learning mentor: Caroline suggested that he enjoys these sessions so much that *'if he could, he'd spend the whole day with her.'*

4.6.2.3 Family time

As part of the action plan, Caroline is invited to school each week to spend time undertaking activities with Jack. Caroline said these sessions, where they draw or play games, were to provide an opportunity for her to spend more time with her son *'cos I got the other two so I don't have much time to spend with Jack so she just, you know, helping to have more time with Jack.'* Jack's younger sisters come into school with Caroline and whilst she is working with Jack, they are looked after by the learning mentor.

In addition to the one-to-one sessions, Jack and his family have participated in two extra-curricular group activities through their involvement with the learning mentor service. These activities are designed to increase the whole family's level of contact with the school and to give them ideas about things they can do as a family.

The first activity was a family art and craft club that met each week for about 6 weeks. A number of families were invited by the learning mentor, although Caroline said they were the most regular attenders:

'There were like three or four families but then it just ended up like sometimes me and Paul, Jack's dad, and then like the other three children and Julie ... I thought that was really good, we enjoyed it.'

Jack also talked about the arts and crafts club and, in particular, the *'long train'* that he made out of clay with his dad and which was put onto a display in the school foyer. Caroline said that Jack's dad enjoyed the club as well and appreciated being able to take part in an activity with their children:

'He [his dad] enjoyed it too. Cos when I was younger we never had nothing like, you know spend time with your mum at school. So things like this, I do think it is really good.'

The second activity was an occasional family meal that was held at the school. Caroline talked about the Christmas meal in particular:

'We come to one of them we did. I thought that were very nice, you know what they did, like dress the table, Julie and that did. It was very nice ... I think it was the Christmas one, yes. We had candles; it was very, you know, nice it was.'

The learning mentor also spoke about the contribution that Jack's dad had made in planning and working in a new garden within the school grounds.

4.6.3 The impact of the service

The provision of the learning mentor service over the last year has resulted in a number of changes for Jack and his family.

4.6.3.1 School attendance

The major impact of the work of the learning mentor service for this family is that Jack now has a much improved school attendance record. Caroline agrees and said that if the service wasn't there she thinks she would *'still be the same trying to get him in school ... she helped me a lot with Jack. If it wasn't for Julie, I think we'd still be having trouble now with Jack.'*

Although he was shy, Jack talked about the things that he liked about school. These included playing football, especially with his friend Christopher. He also likes going in the beehive room where the learning mentor used to be. This is a nature room in the school and Jack particularly liked the beach and the pool. Jack went into this room with a small group of children for lessons where, Jack said, *'you do your names ... then you have a snack ... after work and play'*

4.6.3.2 Behaviour at home

Caroline talked about the changes in Jack's behaviour since he had been attending school, including the fact that he now plays more calmly at home. The learning mentor suggested that this had been an important outcome of their involvement, saying that Jack, who was previously displaying some dangerous behaviour (such as jumping out of windows), is now calmer and listens to his mum. Caroline said that the help she had received from the learning mentor, including guidance about behaviour charts and house rules, was an important element in helping to change Jack's behaviour:

'He was a fairly naughty boy but now he has calmed down a lot ... Before he wouldn't let me, if he wanted something he had to have it there and then. But now he doesn't, he waits. So I have seen a lot of difference in him since like Julie helped with me ... It has took me a long time, so I have seen, you know, a lot of change in him.'

4.6.3.3 Trust in the school

An important element of the provision from the learning mentor service for this family is the knowledge that there is someone at the school who is there for them. This is particularly important for Caroline as it means that she is more confident that her children will be okay whilst they are at school, going some way to counter her own childhood experiences:

There's always someone here like Julie if you need to talk to, 'cos I never liked school, so you know, now I spend more time here now since I met Julie than I did when I was in school ... I know she's always here to help with Jack and I know with Julie here, Jack's alright. I know that sounds daft but he really, he, you know, does know her well. I have a coffee with her, so he knows that he's got someone that, you know, he knows, don't you?'

Caroline suggested that the family has developed a relationship with the learning mentor that was much closer than their relationship with the class teachers. Caroline explained that *'We don't bond like with the other teachers; it's just like Julie ... I take Jack in and say 'hiya' but that's it.'*

4.6.3.4 Involving all members of the family

Although the learning mentor has worked primarily with Caroline and Jack, his two younger siblings already have a very different experience of school than Jack had at their age. They have a positive relationship with the learning mentor and have been regular visitors to the school. Caroline said that the learning mentor also helped to get her second child into nursery when she was a bit younger than the standard age of admission and she saw that as a good thing, saying *'we're more confident now cos me other little girl she goes nursery.'*

The experience of using the learning mentor service has given Caroline an opportunity to reflect on her own childhood experience, particularly the fact that she did not spend much time at school, and Caroline said that she needed outside help to prevent a similar situation occurring with her children:

'It has changed a lot and I think you do get more help now than you did like when I was younger. Cos me mum couldn't get me in school 'cos I used to cry but she never had help like I do now.'

4.6.4 Summary of outcomes

The learning mentor continues to work with Jack and his family but less intensively than before. Looking back at the original aims of the learning mentor service when they became involved with the family, Jack's school attendance has improved and Caroline is becoming increasingly confident about school and is appreciative of the way that the service has encouraged Jack at school, contrasting it with her own negative experience. Jack's younger siblings have become involved with school at an earlier age and Caroline is pleased that her daughter already attends the school nursery.

The work undertaken by the learning mentor with this family has resulted in a number of outcomes, which fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework. These were identified by the family and the learning mentor and are illustrated in Table 4.6.4.1:

Table 4.6.4.1 ***Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities**

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Jack has been referred for investigation into possible ADHD. The learning mentor identified a need for Jack to receive inoculations and an eye test.
Stay safe	Caroline has received advice on parenting skills and strategies to prevent dangerous behaviour.
Enjoy and achieve	Jack's attendance at school has improved. The family spend more time together and have ideas for activities. Early engagement with school has been achieved for Jack's younger siblings.
Make a positive contribution	Jack's dad has helped in the school garden. Caroline and Jack's dad have more confidence.
Achieve economic well-being	Jack's attendance at school will help him to develop skills for the future.

The responses of the project and the family were similar when they were asked about the impact of the service. They were in agreement that the primary objective of improving Jack's attendance at school had been achieved. They also agreed that Jack's behaviour was better; Caroline reported that this was particularly true of his behaviour at home. There was agreement that Caroline's parenting skills had improved

which was facilitating better relationships at home. Caroline has also developed a sense of trust in the school, which both she and the project staff recognised.

4.6.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors which meant that this service met the needs of this family particularly well.

4.6.5.1 Outreach provision

The fact that the learning mentor service was not designed as an entirely school-based service meant that the learning mentor could go to the family's home each morning, if that was what was needed, to ensure that Jack arrived at school. Additional support and activities were provided in school, but outreach resources were initially required in order to get Caroline and Jack into the school.

4.6.5.2 Relationship with project staff

The way that the learning mentor provided the service and related to Jack and his family has been important to the adults and the children. The learning mentor has been the focal point for all contact with the school for all members of the family and this relationship appeared to have been a key factor in developing the level of confidence that Caroline has in the school.

4.6.5.3 Project intensity and longevity

The family's contact with the service began in March 2006 and both Caroline and Jack continued to have daily contact with the learning mentor 15 months later. Caroline was very positive about the support that she was able to call upon if she thought that she needed it and a couple of recent incidents suggest that, although she has increased confidence in the situation at school, she still needed some reassurance. In addition to the support being there for her, Caroline continued to rely upon the learning mentor to be there for Jack during the day if he was unhappy.

4.6.5.4 Holistic approach

From the beginning of the working relationship with this family, the learning mentor service adopted a whole family approach as it was perceived that helping Caroline to build confidence in the school was essential to ensure that she was comfortable with Jack being at school and therefore positive about him (and in future, his siblings)

attending. Important issues about Jack's behaviour were also addressed through the direct work with Caroline.

4.7 Case study 7 - supporting children and families (young carers)

The need for a specific service to support young carers had been identified by the organisation, which already provided support to carers and people with care needs. Money from the Cheshire Children's Fund was first granted in 2003 and was used to employ a worker for 12 hours per week to develop a service for young carers. Since then, additional funding from other sources resulted in an increase in the worker's hours and contributed to funding sessional staff and specific activities.

The young carers group, which meets on a weekly basis at a local community centre, has a programme of activities that are publicised in advance. This programme includes information sessions in addition to indoor and outdoor leisure activities. Residential weekends and trips to events such as football matches and the cinema are also offered to the young people who attend the group. One-to-one sessions are available and the project can facilitate access to counselling if this is required.

Referrals to the group come from a range of voluntary and statutory services or from the families themselves. Following the receipt of a referral, the project worker will visit the family to provide more information about the support the project can offer. An initial discussion takes place to identify their individual needs and to consider how the project or other agencies can respond. Other issues may come to the fore over time if the child or young person becomes involved. The project is currently developing a protocol for individual assessment and review.

In the Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan, this service was identified as working primarily towards the *Every Child Matters* outcomes be healthy, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

4.7.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

This family was told about the Children's Fund project by a carer who had been providing a domiciliary service for Tracy, a mother of two boys, for about a year. The carer saw that the family were, as Tracy put it, '*having a pretty rough time*' and asked if

there was anything else the agency could do to help. This resulted in a visit from the young carers' worker from the same organisation and an introduction to the young carers group.

Initially, just the older sibling, Sam, became involved with the project. Although the family's attendance at the young carers group has not been continuous, Sam and his younger brother, David, have been in contact with the project for about 4½ years.

At the time that the family first had contact with the project for young carers, Sam was experiencing some difficulties, both at home and at school. Tracy explained this in the following way:

'At the time, my carers and my social workers were aware that Sam was starting to have quite challenging behaviour and felt he needed an outlet. We touched on foster carers and for about a year tried various different groups but it ended up that the young carers group sort of got involved with us for Sam. The reason, it was just Sam at the time, was as I say to give really me and David a break because he was lashing out at us about various issues. So that's really, in quite a negative way, how we got involved.'

So although the young carers group was an opportunity for Sam to do something different, it was also seen as having a wider family benefit in providing some respite for Tracy and David. David talked about his brother's initial involvement with the project in the following way:

'Even though it's a young carers club, they didn't especially send him as a young carer – they sent him more to get him out of the house and give me and my mum a break. Even though it gave him a break as well it just gave us a bit of time without him around.'

Sam saw his attendance at the group as a social outlet, as 'a bit of fun' and an opportunity to 'go out, make some new friends.' Although seeing it in a broader context, Tracy did think that it played this role as well:

'But he enjoyed it. I mean at the time he realised it was to get him out of a situation and I think he did realise that he was going as not a punishment, but as a necessity really.'

Sam's younger brother, David, started attending the group some time later. For him, the young carers group was a social outlet, a chance to 'get out of the house and give me something to do in the week, just have a bit of fun.'

The service described the reason for the family's involvement with the project as being to enable Sam and David to take part in leisure activities and to increase their social skills.

4.7.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Although both brothers attended the young carers group, their experiences appeared to be quite different.

4.7.2.1 Sam's experience

When asked about the sort of things they did with the young carers group, Sam spoke primarily about the leisure activities. He said that he was involved in '*all different types of things*', including swimming and rock climbing, playing football and cards. Some of these activities were new to him and some he had done before. He was also involved in a number of charity events, such as car washing, to raise money.

Whilst Sam only spoke briefly about the one-to-one sessions that he had with a project worker, describing them as '*a bit of help*' and saying that he felt able to talk about '*pretty much everything*' during these sessions, Tracy placed more emphasis on the one-to-one support and counselling that was available to Sam when he started attending the group. She considered that it was something that Sam needed when he first became involved and spoke positively about the support that the family received from the group, saying that the project '*stuck with us*' and made a real effort to provide the help that Sam required.

Sam, who is now 15 years old, no longer attends the project because, as he explained, he has a different social life with his girlfriend and other friends as well as a part-time job.

4.7.2.2 David's experience

David, who is 13 years old, still attends the young carers group each week. His introduction to the group appears to have been primarily for social reasons, providing an opportunity for him to take part in a range of activities with friends that he has made at the group.

David said that he particularly enjoyed the sessions that take place away from the centre and talked enthusiastically about the Peak Pursuits programme of outdoor activities and the Level 1 accreditation they could achieve. He described the residential that he had attended in Scotland as the best thing about his involvement with the project. He said that this was *'a break from like being around the house and being bored around the house and stuff and it's just nice to go out and have some fun.'*

The social aspect of the young carers group was important to David and he said that he enjoyed meeting new people on the residential as well as having friends at the weekly group: he said that there were *'about three or four people my age that I get on with – but I get on with everyone else really.'* Some of the activities, such as raft building, have built relationships within the group as David explained *'because like with your friends you're helping them and they're helping you.'* David said that they sometimes talked about being a carer *'but mainly we're just having fun because like all the different stuff we're doing.'*

David spoke about the information sessions on topics such as drugs and alcohol and said that they were presented in an interesting way. He said that some of the topics they had already covered at school but it was helpful to have more information.

David was aware of the one-to-one support available for the young people who attend the young carers group. He said that he knew that *'if I needed to talk to Kevin [the project worker] I would be able to'* and he said that he would *'probably, like, always keep in contact with [the project worker] just 'cos he's like always there.'* But most of their conversations, David said, were about *'boys' things really, like football and stuff.'*

Outside of the young carers group, David explained that the project was trying to arrange funding that would enable him to have guitar lessons. He was given a guitar for Christmas and said that he really wanted to learn how to play it. David described the guitar lessons as something that he could carry on with even when the other activities had stopped. David spoke briefly about his social life outside the project, saying that he went to a youth club once a week and also spent time *'out and about with friends.'*

4.7.3 Impact of the service

The impact of the involvement of the brothers in the young carers groups has been felt by the whole family. Although it provided a break for other members of the family when

the eldest brother started attending, both boys saw it as somewhere that they could have fun themselves and take part in a variety of activities. Sam was also able to access personal support and counselling through the group when he first started attending.

4.7.3.1 Respite for the family

When Sam first became involved with the young carers project, Tracy said that one of the key things for herself and her younger son was to have a break from his difficult behaviour. Tracy explained these difficulties and the involvement of the project and social services in the following way:

‘Just couldn’t get on, could we, for a while. Bit on both sides, it was but yes, they kept it going. I’ve told them that, I mean if it was for social services, the kids team, my side are great the disability team, if it wasn’t for the kids team I don’t know where we’d have been. So thank goodness [the project] stuck with us, even when we gave them a bit of a hard time, didn’t we, at the beginning.’

Tracy said that Sam has since ‘settled well’ and that as a family they appreciated the role that the young carers project had in this process.

4.7.3.2 Personal support

Although the boys primarily spoke about their involvement with the young carers group in terms of the leisure activities, they also referred to the fact that one-to-one support was available if they needed it. The opportunity to talk over issues and receive advice and support was particularly important for Sam: he said that his attendance at the young carers group had made a difference to his behaviour, both because there was ‘stuff to do and be away from the house as well so you’re not constantly here’ and by providing access to someone he could talk to:

‘I was a bit of a rebel. I think at first when I started it wasn’t the best it can be but now obviously it’s changed quite a lot, it’s a lot better now ... it relaxed me a bit, I’m a bit cooler, not as argumentative.’

Tracy placed a greater importance than her eldest son on the impact of the personal support that Sam had received when he started attending the group.

4.7.3.3 Leisure opportunities

Through the young carers group, Sam and David got involved in regular social activities. They enjoyed both the weekly activities and the residential trips that took

them away from home for a short while. Sam said that the best part was *'probably when you go out and stay somewhere for a couple of days. It's good fun. You get away from your house; have a bit of time to yourself.'* Sam said that before he went to the group, he did not do anything outside school but at the group he made some good friends.

Sam and David described the range of activities that they had done with the young carers group. David said that he is in a *'happy mood'* when he comes back from the group *'because I've done something fun and [it's] just given me something to do really instead of being sat at home.'* David liked the residential trips and activities *'because I've met new people and been able to do something I can't really do at home'* and said that he took the opportunity to do any activity that was offered:

'Well yes, like my mum said before, I always get involved. When Kevin [project worker] gives us a list, I tick all of them just because, if for some reason it can't be happening, then that's alright but as long as I've ticked it all then I'm fine with everything ... I just go with whatever happens.'

Having fun and doing things that they enjoyed was the motivation for the involvement of both boys in the group.

4.7.3.4 Skills

Some of the activities were new experiences for the boys, particularly those related to outdoor pursuits. When talking about these activities David said: *'I'm like proud of myself if I can achieve something and just like boost my confidence a bit.'* David also said that he had made new friends at the project and that it had helped him become more sociable, although he did not consider that he was shy, *'just normal.'* Sam perceived that some of the physical activities he undertook with the project helped him in physical education (PE) lessons in school.

4.7.4 Summary of outcomes

The family's involvement with the young carers project provided both Sam and David with opportunities to become involved in a range of social activities and to develop their social skills. One-to-one support has also been available if the boys felt that they needed it: this was an important feature of the provision for Sam when he first became involved in the group.

Involvement with the project has resulted in a number of outcomes for Sam and David, which fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework. These were identified by the project worker and by Sam and David and are illustrated Table 4.7.4.1 below.

Table 4.7.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	David and Sam have been involved in outdoor activities and a link was made at the project between the activities and keeping fit and eating well. David has received drug education information. Sam received one-to-one support to discuss difficulties he was experiencing.
Stay safe	David attended home safety talks, related to looking after someone in the home. David attended a first aid course. All activities undertaken by the boys were conducted in a safe and secure environment.
Enjoy and achieve	David has received accreditation for activities such as first aid and kayaking. Outdoor activities helped Sam in PE at school. David has had the opportunity to try new sports and activities.
Make a positive contribution	Sam took part in a charity event washing cars. David has been involved in group activities.
Achieve economic well-being	The importance of doing well at school has been communicated at the project and David has received information about Connexions services.

When comparing the views expressed by the project staff and the family, the project and the family agreed about the importance of the personal support and leisure opportunities that were available. In addition, the family also spoke about additional impacts through the mode in which the project had provided some respite when their oldest son was experiencing considerable difficulties and the younger son described the way that his involvement had boosted his confidence, social and physical skills.

4.7.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors that meant that the young carers group met the needs of this family particularly well.

4.7.5.1 Timing of involvement

The timing of Sam's initial involvement with the project was important to the family as a whole. At this point, Sam was experiencing some difficulties at home and at school and Tracy said that he was '*close to being kicked out*' at home. She considered that Sam's attendance in the young carers group had helped the family to stay together at this difficult time, both by providing respite for her and her younger son and by offering diversionary activities and an opportunity for one-to-one support for Sam.

4.7.5.2 Holistic approach

The family was told about the young carers group by a care worker from the same voluntary agency. The family knew the organisation through this domiciliary care service and so felt confident about accessing the group at a difficult time.

David talked about the relationship they had built up with the project worker and the way that their contact with the agency was wider than the young carers group. He said that he thought the fact that the whole family was involved had made a difference:

'... because like my mum gets on with Kevin [project worker] quite well as well and that's how my mum's got Kevin to get the funding as well for my guitar lessons even though that's nothing to do with the actual club so yes [the project] on the whole has been a help. Someone comes here to help my mum every Monday and they're from [the project] as well.'

4.7.5.3 Activities available

David, in particular, was keen to get involved in any activities that were offered by the young carers group and so had been able to take part in a wide range of activities that had enabled him to develop personally and to learn particular skills. He was particularly enthusiastic about the outdoor pursuits, especially kayaking, and spoke about the way that this involvement had a broader impact on his life, making him feel '*brighter*' at home and at school.

4.8 Case study 8 - supporting children and families (parenting support)

In 2003, money from the Cheshire Children's Fund was used by the local authority to fund a newly created post to support parenting work. It was identified that parenting services within the county could be enhanced and a strategic overview was required.

Finance from the Children's Fund enabled the service to develop an accredited training programme to improve the skills of staff who were delivering parenting support in the community; to produce a strategy for multi-agency working in the field of parenting support and to support established practitioner networks. Funding was also made available to plug gaps in the provision of parenting support through employment of existing agencies and to allocate small grants to organisations which were developing their parenting support services.

One organisation to receive such a grant was a support service for single parents. Established in 1988, this project provided a range of activities for families, including a weekly drop-in session for parents, an after school club for children aged 11 to 16 years and school holiday activities for primary school-aged children. The service also delivered outreach work, one-to-one counselling and family activities and will refer families to other voluntary and statutory agencies if necessary. One example of this is to an organisation which supplies grants to enable single-parent families to go on holiday.

The project was offered training for its practitioners in September 2004 to enable them to facilitate parenting courses within their own organisation: prior to this, the staff had not undertaken accredited parenting training. The service then developed its own parenting programme for parents within their own centre and has also been able to provide courses for other local organisations such as the YMCA. To support the subsequent delivery of parenting courses, a grant from the parenting service was awarded which enabled the development of a programme based on the accredited structure, but tailored to the needs of the local community. Further training has taken place for other members of staff.

Families are referred to the project from both voluntary and statutory organisations. These include health visitors (who account for the majority of referrals), the Youth Offending Team, general practitioners, and the Benefits Agency. Most new referrals to the service are parents who have recently experienced a family break up through separation, divorce or bereavement.

The Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan lists the *Every Child Matters* objectives for the county-wide parenting service as stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. The service also states a local objective to enable to access services at a neighbourhood level

(Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The single parent support project that received the grant and that is the subject of the case study identified three key elements to its work: be healthy, stay safe, and enjoy and achieve.

4.8.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

When Sophie's younger son, James, now aged 6 years, was born, Sophie found it difficult to cope. She found this hard to understand as she had not experienced problems when her first son, William, was born 7 years earlier. Sophie's health visitor suggested that she access support from the single parent support service and Sophie went along to a drop-in session.

Sophie had expected a mother and toddler group and was surprised to find that the service also offered a crèche facility, which provided parents some respite. This was a particularly appealing aspect of the service for Sophie who felt that she was not coping at home.

The service described Sophie's family as a single parent family under stress at the time of their referral. They identified a need to offer help and support to Sophie through parenting courses and weekly contact at the drop-in service and provide an opportunity for the children to attend out of school and social activities.

4.8.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Sophie has been using the service for 6 years, although the nature of her involvement has changed during that time. Sophie initially attended the drop-in sessions but has since undertaken parenting courses, accessed counselling and attended many family activities with her two sons. Her children have taken part in after school activities and the eldest, William, attends the weekly drop-in session for 11 to 16 year olds. Sophie's main support worker at the project perceives that during the time she has attended, Sophie's role at the drop-in and at other activities has altered from that of a service user to a more active mentor for other parents.

4.8.2.1 Parenting and other courses

Sophie has attended a number of courses delivered by the project over a number of years. The nature of these courses varied from practical skills to use in the home to courses more focussed on parenting techniques: for all of the courses, there were certificates on completion. The practical courses Sophie attended included first aid and

cooking on a budget. Sophie also took part in several parenting programmes, including a programme for parents of teenagers, a programme for parents of children aged 5 to 15 years, and an assertiveness course which she particularly valued.

4.8.2.2 Parent's weekly drop-in

The drop-in sessions, held every Thursday morning at a local church, offer an opportunity for lone parents to meet and chat, providing mutual support for one another. Project staff are on hand to answer questions and offer advice and they also endeavour to provide information for parents with the help of visiting specialists. The sessions are informal and parents are encouraged to use the crèche facilities so that they can enjoy some time away from their children.

Sophie has attended these sessions for a number of years. She said that she did not know anyone at the sessions when she first attended, but found the atmosphere friendly and the shared circumstances of the attendees made conversation easy. Before James began at school, Sophie used and valued the crèche facility when she attended the drop-in.

4.8.2.3 Counselling

The service provides a confidential listening service and a counselling service to all parents. Sophie undertook several one-to-one sessions with a trained counsellor: she described this process as '*brilliant*,' saying that she found it easy to talk to the counsellor.

4.8.2.4 Young person's drop-in

An after school club is held for young people aged 11 to 16 years every Thursday afternoon for an hour and a half from 3:30pm. At the group, young people play games, take part in group and one-to-one support sessions and sometimes go on excursions. William regularly attends the group and his support worker described him as an enthusiastic member of the club. Sophie said that she hears more about the after school club from her son than about other activities with which he is involved:

'He tells me about [the club] which is unusual because he's normally very private about school and things, but he tells me about [the club].'

The young people have access to board and computer games within the club, but often games will take the form of group activities with a focus on team building.

Excursions have included trips to an amusement park and outdoor pursuit activities where the young people had been given the opportunity to attain canoeing qualifications.

William has taken part in personal development courses, both alone and within a group. One such course was anger management where games were used to encourage the participants to imagine what their response might be in a fictional situation. William found the approach used within the sessions appealing and spoke positively about his experiences on the course, saying that it had helped him cope with situations and had calmed him down:

'We had all these picture cards and we were given a situation, and had to choose our response ... Now I count to 10 and think about what I'm going to do.'

4.8.2.5 Family activities

Sophie, William and James have taken part in many of the family activities organised by the service. The service described the aim of these activities as teaching families to have fun together. The family tried orienteering, which both William and his mother described with enthusiasm. This activity required a team effort and good communication, which the family said was a challenge for them but they were ultimately successful.

4.8.3 The impact of the service

Both Sophie and staff at the service recognised significant changes in Sophie during her time with the service – Sophie herself said that she would '*dread to think*' about what would have happened if she had not got involved with the service, suggesting that '*I would be a wreck.*' The impact of the service for Sophie and her family include increased confidence and self-esteem, an improved atmosphere within the family home and an increased social involvement.

4.8.3.1 Confidence

Sophie perceived that the assertiveness training she had undertaken with the service represented the most important aspect of her involvement. She said that she felt more confident in her role as a parent as a result of this course, confidence that she said had stemmed from the development of parenting strategies learnt through the service

programmes and a broader practical knowledge gained through courses such as first aid and cookery. She perceived that the assertiveness training course had achieved the most significant impact on her family:

‘The assertiveness course [has] made a big difference. I know how to handle James now, because it was a shock when James came along and I couldn’t cope.’

The support worker said that they had seen a change in Sophie’s confidence, demonstrated by her adoption of an unofficial mentoring role with other mums who use the service. Sophie described how she encouraged parents who were new to the service to make use of the crèche:

‘They might have trouble leaving their kids in [the crèche] but I say, “leave them, have a break, they’ll get used to it, like James did. You have to leave them and they’ll be fine as soon as you’re gone.”’

Sophie has also worked as a volunteer within the crèche. Whilst she is unsure as to whether this represents a career opportunity for her, it has given her the confidence to consider other career options.

The service staff perceived that the self-confidence of both children had developed as a result of their involvement with the service, particularly with the family activities. William reported that he had gained confidence when approaching new situations as the young people were repeatedly offered new challenges. He displayed a great deal of enthusiasm for the activities undertaken with the service as well as a sense of loyalty to the club, which he attended regularly. He also said that friends at school had found out about the club through his recommendation.

William appreciated the opportunity to gain recognition for activities he had undertaken (such as canoeing qualifications, certificates and rewards for taking part in activities), highlighting the sense of pride he had experienced in his own achievements. William said that he now had very clear career aspirations and was gaining experience in his chosen field through part-time work.

4.8.3.2 Family interaction

During the initial stages of her contact with the service, the crèche facility offered Sophie some welcome respite from her caring responsibilities. In addition to the supportive environment of the group, Sophie suggested that it helped to relieve her

stress levels a great deal and consequently eased tensions at home. Sophie identified access to the crèche as being significant for other parents too:

'I see other parents go into the crèche and when they come back out they are totally different, just not stressed anymore.'

The parenting skills that Sophie developed through the courses offered by the service also served to transform home life for this family. Sophie referred several times to her children's astonishment at her different approach to discipline:

'I don't shout anymore. William says I go deathly silent, like he's waiting for me to blow up, but I don't. If James's playing up, I think about the course and what to do. They're stunned when I don't shout. And it does work with them.'

Sophie reported that her relationship with James, in particular, was greatly improved since she became involved with the service, saying that she was much calmer with him and he was less clingy as a result of the parenting courses, one-to-one support and other activities that they had taken part in.

William also identified personal changes that he put down to his involvement with the service, saying that he had become calmer and citing the anger management course as having been an effective programme for him. His mother also reported that he had become quieter but more communicative.

Sophie's support worker perceived that a more stable and balanced lifestyle for the family as a whole had been established as a result of contact with the project. The support worker also said that she felt that Sophie was now better equipped to take responsibility for her family during times of stress.

4.8.3.3 Social interaction

Recognition that other parents using the service shared her situation gave Sophie a sense of ease within the group and the extent to which she has become involved with the service also indicates that her social networks developed. Sophie's support worker perceived that the family as a whole had developed a greater respect and value for others in the community as a result of the development of their own self-worth. This was also demonstrated by the evolution of Sophie's mentoring role within the service.

William also reported that he had made a number of good friends at the club he attended. He also felt confident enough to promote the club informally amongst friends at school, some of whom now attend the after school club.

4.8.4 Summary of outcomes

The service objectives of providing help and support through a range of services, including the parenting programmes, were achieved and Sophie's objective of improving her ability to cope with her two children was also realised. The key outcomes for this family have been the development of self-confidence and a more stable home life, although several other outcomes have contributed to this, as highlighted by both the family and the service staff. These outcomes, as illustrated in Table 4.8.4.1, fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework.

Table 4.8.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	<i>Project activity</i>
Stay safe	Sophie has developed first aid skills through the parenting courses. The children have developed a sense of safety in relation to outdoor pursuit activities.
Be healthy	The family have developed a healthy lifestyle following Sophie's involvement in parenting and cookery courses. Levels of stress within the family have reduced.
Enjoy and achieve	The family have learned to enjoy leisure time together. William has achieved recognition for his canoeing skills and participation in courses at the after school club.
Make a positive contribution	Sophie has adopted a mentoring role for other parents using the service. William is an enthusiastic member of the club and ambassador for the service.
Achieve economic well-being	Sophie is considering career options following experience at the crèche.

Both the family and project staff expressed very similar views about the impact of the service. They both considered that the development of Sophie's parenting skills had made a difference to the whole family, giving her increased confidence and skills to handle difficult situations, and that the boys had benefited from their involvement in the activities through the development of their confidence and social skills. Sophie and the

boys were also able to speak about the way that all of these things had contributed positively to the atmosphere at home and the relationships between family members.

4.8.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were several factors that encouraged the successful work with this family. The longevity and breadth of the support offered; the development of good relationships with staff members; and the alleviation of stress through access to respite for Sophie all contributed to the development of a more stable lifestyle for the family. The parenting courses were the only aspect that were directly funded by Cheshire Children's Fund, all other elements of the service had alternative funding sources. Whilst the parenting courses were vital in helping Sophie to achieve her objectives, it does appear to have been the delivery of these courses in conjunction with range of other support services that determined the extent of the project's positive impact.

4.8.5.1 Routine

The services provided by the project became part of the weekly routine for Sophie's family. William attended the after school club on a weekly basis, while Sophie attended the drop-in weekly and the family as a whole regularly participated in activities and excursions. The routine provided by their use of the service, along with the advice and support provided, helped to establish a more stable home life for the family.

4.8.5.2 Project longevity

The long term nature of the support offered by the project allowed Sophie and her family to develop good relationships with staff and other families attending the activities. William had established a strong network of friends at the club as he had been involved for some years with the same group of young people. These relationships facilitated the development of confidence and self-esteem amongst all members of the family.

4.8.5.3 Relationship with project staff

Sophie's long-term relationship with the project enabled her to develop a strong relationship with her support worker. Sophie's trust in her support worker was demonstrated by her request that she was present for the interview for this research. The constancy of this relationship had helped Sophie to grow in confidence and

develop self-esteem; it also facilitated her involvement in the parenting courses which, in turn, led to increased confidence in parenting skills. Sophie's trust in the staff encouraged her to put into practice at home things that she had learned on the courses, with successful results.

4.8.5.4 Opportunity for respite

Sophie spoke in very positive terms about the availability of the project's crèche facilities. She identified the respite afforded by this care as an appealing aspect of the service because it was something that she felt that she needed at the time – it consequently encouraged her continued attendance at the drop-in during the early days of her contact with the service. Time away from James, who was exhibiting difficult behaviour when Sophie first came into contact with the service, relieved a great deal of Sophie's stress at this time. This break allowed Sophie the opportunity to develop relationships with other adults in a similar position and to undertake the parenting courses that she found so helpful.

4.8.5.5 Breadth of provision

The different aspects of the project were combined to ensure that holistic support was delivered to this family and that services could be accessed as appropriate. The skills learned in the parenting courses were reiterated in the family activities and drop-in sessions. Similarly, the availability of crèche facilities ensured that Sophie received respite and, consequently, was more receptive to support provided at the drop-in session. The one-to-one counselling sessions also ensured that Sophie's individual emotional needs were met.

4.9 Case study 9 - supporting children and families (domestic abuse)

Since 2003, funding from Cheshire Children's Fund has enabled the employment of a children's worker in a number of women's refuges in the county. The refuge in this case study employs a worker for 18 hours per week (from 1pm to 7pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) to undertake individual and group activities with the children who are living there. The activities include play sessions, help with homework, and one-to-one support. The children's worker may also facilitate access to after school clubs or local leisure activities if that is appropriate for a particular child and may assist a family in their contact with schools and other providers such as health services.

Soon after the child's arrival at the refuge, the children's worker will introduce herself to the child or young person. This will often be when the child's mum is speaking to her key worker about her situation and the meeting with the children's worker provides an alternative focus for the child. The children's worker will first complete an admission sheet with each child, followed by an individual support form which will identify issues that need to be encompassed within the child's first action plan. Notes will be made after each of the children's worker's sessions with a child to record the work undertaken, any progress, and issues or concerns; individual action plans are updated on a weekly basis. Rainbow sheets are completed by the child at regular intervals so they can see how things have changed during their stay at the refuge.

In addition to the work with individual children and group sessions at the refuge, the children's worker also aims to play a wider role with other agencies, especially schools, to increase their understanding of the situation of children and young people who are fleeing from domestic abuse and the impact that it may have on all areas of their lives.

In the Cheshire Children's Fund Operation and Strategic Plan, this service identifies itself as working primarily towards three *Every Child Matters* outcomes: these are be healthy, stay safe and enjoy and achieve (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The importance of achieving these three outcomes was stressed by the service as a precursor to making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

4.9.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

Daniel moved into the refuge with his mum, Michelle, as a result of domestic abuse. Daniel was 7 years old at the time and so, soon after his arrival, was introduced to the children's worker who worked at the refuge on a part-time basis.

The children's worker said that the aims of the work with Daniel were to build self-esteem, to improve confidence, to dispel myths around domestic abuse, to talk about his emotions and feelings and to encourage social inclusion. The way that the family expressed the aims of the service was less specific. Michelle said that the children's worker was there to focus on her son rather than work with them as a family: she clearly considered the children's worker as someone who was specifically '*a child's support worker ... being there for the children*' and that she had her own support worker.

Daniel said that when he first arrived at the refuge he was invited to talk with the children's worker whilst someone else was talking to his mum. He said that he thought that the children's worker was '*someone who you play with.*'

4.9.2 Nature of the family's involvement

Daniel and Michelle lived at the refuge for approximately 9 months. During this time, there were a number of different elements to their contact with the children's worker. These included practical help, the provision of leisure activities and one-to-one support.

4.9.2.1 Practical help

The children's worker was able to provide practical help to the family, particularly in helping to find a school place for Daniel and to ensure that Daniel's hospital appointments were kept.

As they had previously lived in another area of the country, the move to the refuge meant that Daniel needed to move to new school. The family had no knowledge of the local schools and so Michelle appreciated the fact that the children's worker could provide personal and timely advice for them:

'She knew of the schools as well 'cos there's other children who live in the refuge that need the school. And she knew which one was the best for Daniel because she knows the schools around this area ... It's good that she was there to help me with that. More settling.'

Daniel spoke about moving to the area and the impact that this had on his schooling and social network, saying that '*when I was moving here I lost my friends and I had to make different ones.*' Both Michelle and Daniel were happy that he was able to stay at the same school when they left the refuge as they were re-housed nearby.

The children's worker was also available to provide transport and support Michelle at hospital appointments that Daniel needed to attend but which Michelle had previously found difficult to keep. Michelle appreciated the '*extra support*' that the worker was able to provide at these appointments and now feels that she has more confidence, which will enable her to attend these appointments alone in the future.

4.9.2.2 Leisure activities

The children's worker organises after school and holiday activities for the children who are living at the refuge. Daniel and his mum both talked about the play sessions and a number of the trips that he was involved with.

Daniel spoke about some of the things that they did at the refuge such as '*skipping and making stuff*,' including the pizzas that they made for tea. Michelle said that she would sometimes go in when Daniel was doing activities such as painting or drawing with the children's worker. The children's worker also arranged birthday parties for the children in the refuge and this was something that Daniel recalled with pleasure:

'When I was in there I had my birthday and it was much better than when we were at my old house.'

Daniel also spoke about some of the trips that they went on from the refuge:

'Sometimes we went to the cinema or played with the outdoor stuff ... We went to this one place when you went on rides, we went there.'

His favourite activity, however, was going swimming which, he recalled, they did three times. Daniel particularly liked jumping in the pool and said that he would like to start going to a swimming club.

Daniel was very positive about the activities that were on offer. He said that he had not expected there to be so much happening at the refuge and had thought '*it was just where you go and stay in a room or something*.'

4.9.2.3 One-to-one support

An important part of the role of the children's worker is the one-to-one sessions that she has with each of the children whilst they are living at the refuge. The service sees this as an important time when children can talk about, and come to understand more about, their situation and any specific support needs can be identified and addressed.

During the interview, Daniel spoke about the times when he saw the children's worker on his own to, as his mum put it, talk about '*the good and bad things*.' These meetings happened about every 2 weeks. Daniel spoke about the book that he completed with the children's worker to put down his thoughts. He said that initially he found it difficult

to talk to the children's worker about 'private' things: *'It was hard at first, then when we were in the middle really, then it started to get easier.'*

Michelle was not involved in these sessions unless Daniel asked her to come in. She appreciated the fact that her son might need to talk to someone else and did not feel that she needed to be more involved:

'When they do their own time [the children's worker] likes to be on her own with them you see so then they can express their own feelings without having their mum behind them ... It makes them a bit uncomfortable because like he might not want to talk to me ... When he was on his own I wouldn't disturb him unless he wanted me to, 'cos it's his own comfort isn't it, his choice.'

Michelle said that this was the most important element of the work that the children's worker did with her son whilst they lived at the refuge. Michelle was happy with the frequency of the one-to-one sessions and did not think that Daniel needed any more support from the children's worker than was available at the time.

4.9.3 The impact of the service

The fact that this service was seen by the family as something that was provided specifically for Daniel was reflected when they talked about the impact of the service, referring almost exclusively to the impact upon the child.

4.9.3.1 Confidence

While the family did not talk explicitly about Daniel's self-esteem, Michelle reported that Daniel's confidence had developed during the time that he spent with the children's worker:

'He was very shy and wouldn't talk to anybody when we first moved in there which is normal really but Daniel was in his little shell from what he come from. He wouldn't talk really to anybody. So, confidence ... being able to talk up to people. Like a couple of years ago he wouldn't have been able to do this today which is good. I'm proud of him doing this today ... he's very grown up aren't you?'

Daniel said that he thought he was more confident with both adults and children and Michelle also spoke about the friends that he had made at school, although Daniel said *'I haven't made a lot of friends ... I've only got two.'* Michelle suggested to Daniel, however, that his friendships at school were *'better than before.'*

Although the children's worker was not a support worker for Michelle, she did accompany Michelle and Daniel to hospital appointments and this support appeared to have an impact on Michelle's confidence. She said that she now felt more able to make these visits on her own.

4.9.3.2 Behaviour

Michelle suggested that there had been positive changes in Daniel's behaviour which she linked the personal changes which took place whilst they were living at the refuge. Michelle expressed the view that despite what he had been through and the health issues that Daniel has, his behaviour had improved and he had now '*settled down*' at home and at school:

'I think he must have picked up bad habits from his father or something but he never really seemed to play sensibly. Where at this school he's settled right down and he's getting on with his work. He's getting his badges aren't you? Yes. And he has his problem as well, he has to cope with all that, and sort that out.'

Michelle spoke about the positive contribution that Daniel now made around the house saying '*He's good at home.*' and said that his continuing good behaviour was also reflected in the rewards that he was achieving at school:

'He's just got his gold award, he gets a bronze award for 50 merits and then a silver award for 50 merits and now he's just got his gold award for 50 merits ... But in his old school he wouldn't have been able to do that neither. So he's really, really concentrating, aren't you?'

4.9.3.3 Coping skills

As part of developing children's understanding of their situation and what led them to be living at the refuge, the children's worker helped Daniel to develop coping strategies and life skills. Daniel clearly understood the importance of this work, particularly in relation to staying safe and he spoke about what this meant for him on a daily basis:

'Because every time you're out ... I don't want to tell that lady my name in case my dad finds out where I am. So that's the one where you're being safe isn't it. Not telling people where you live, many people.'

One impact of the family's stay at the refuge was an appreciation of the value of the personal support that the children's worker was able to offer Daniel during their one-to-

one sessions. One issue that was of concern for Michelle, therefore, was that this support, combined with the play sessions, ended when they left the refuge. Whilst Michelle was very positive about the support that she had access to after they had been re-housed – *‘they always say if you do ever need any help just phone us up ... So you’re not just left there on your own then you know that you have got someone you can talk to’* – she felt that something very worthwhile had come to an abrupt end for Daniel:

‘Yes. She’s great. That’s all I can say really, for children in the refuge. To move out, they don’t get enough ... it would be nice to stay in touch at least for a year, just while they adjust to not having that. Because he’s used to having that play session twice a week and then it’s just taken from them then. And it must be hard.’

Michelle argued that just as she had valued the ongoing support that she could call upon for up to 2 years after they had moved from the refuge, children should also have access to independent support as needs do not cease upon leaving the refuge:

‘Where the parents are not involved, like they did in the refuge, the one-to-one that’s what would be good for now.... Yes because we don’t know what happens in children’s brains do you? I mean sometimes he might want to talk to somebody without talking to me.’

4.9.4 Summary of outcomes

Daniel’s involvement with the project had increased his awareness of the family’s situation with regard to domestic abuse and the implications that had for his personal safety. Daniel spoke briefly about the one-to-one sessions with the children’s worker and, whilst valuing these sessions, considered them a private matter. Daniel had also participated in social activities at the refuge and was growing in confidence in social situations and at school.

The work undertaken by the children’s worker resulted in a number of outcomes for Daniel and Michelle, which fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework. These outcomes are illustrated in Table 4.9.4.1: they were identified by the children’s worker, by Daniel and by his mum.

Table 4.9.4.1 ***Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities**

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	The children's worker facilitated Daniel's attendance at hospital appointments. Daniel took part in physical leisure activities at the refuge and has developed an interest in swimming. Daniel accessed one-to-one sessions to identify and address any emotional issues. Daniel took part in healthy eating activities at the refuge.
Stay safe	The family was removed from a dangerous environment. Daniel has developed coping strategies to stay safe.
Enjoy and achieve	Daniel was able to stay at same school when the family was re-housed and therefore maintain the same peer group. Daniel is more involved at school as reflected by the awards he has received.
Make a positive contribution	Daniel is more able to speak out and is growing in confidence.
Achieve economic well-being	The family was re-housed in the community.

The views expressed by the project staff, Daniel and Michelle in relation to the impact of the service were largely similar. All agreed that the one-to-one support and the play sessions had contributed to Daniel's increased self-confidence and both the family and the children's worker also spoke about the impact of the project on the development of Daniel's social and coping skills, particularly in relation to staying safe. An additional impact identified by Michelle was the change in Daniel's behaviour at home and at school and she attributed this, in part, to his sessions with the children's worker.

4.9.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors that resulted in this service meeting the needs of this family particularly well.

4.9.5.1 Relationship with project staff

Both Daniel and Michelle spoke about the positive relationship that had developed between themselves and the children's worker. Daniel spoke about the fact that she was easy to speak to once he had got to know her and that he had enjoyed taking part

in the activities that she arranged. Michelle said that parents and children were very positive about the worker and her role:

‘They always wanted more: “Where’s Clare? Where’s Clare?” “She’s poorly today.” “Ooh, where’s Clare?” Even the parents said that sometimes. “Where’s Clare?” We love Clare we do.’

4.9.5.2 Targeted support

From the time that Michelle and Daniel entered the refuge they knew that there was someone who could offer individual support to each of them. The combination of fun activities and one-to-one sessions meant that the children’s worker could engage with Daniel on a number of levels whilst all the time building a positive relationship and developing his skills and confidence.

Daniel enjoyed the leisure activities and, whilst living at the refuge, developed a particular interest in swimming. In terms of the one-to-one sessions, the length of time that Daniel and Michelle spent at the refuge meant that the children’s worker could identify and respond to Daniel’s changing needs and help him to prepare for the family’s move back into the community.

4.9.5.3 Breadth of provision

The practical help that the children’s worker could also provide was important at a time when Daniel and Michelle needed additional support to re-establish themselves in a new locality. Michelle was particularly appreciative of the input of the children’s worker when they needed to find a new school. The flexibility of the service also allowed the children’s worker to accompany Michelle and Daniel to the hospital appointments that they had previously found difficult to attend.

4.10 Case study 10 - supporting children and families (family support)

This service was established in 2003 through the Cheshire Children’s Fund to address the needs of children displaying difficulties in schools in a deprived area of Cheshire. Commissioners identified a need to bring together schools and families to address issues such as poor attendance, behaviour problems, and underachievement. The service is operated by a team of four family link workers based in 10 primary schools in Cheshire, and a project manager.

The project staff have invested time to developing closer links with parents to ensure that their work is widely known and referrals are made to the service by parents or teachers. Link workers undertake one-to-one work with children and with parents, usually in a school setting: sessions with the whole family may also be conducted. As staff seek to identify and meet a family's needs, work may also involve liaison with other agencies and accompanying parents to medical or legal appointments.

Link workers seek to address the issues that led to referral, such as poor school attendance, but further objectives may be established if other issues are identified during the first few sessions with a family. The project staff aim to achieve all of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes with some families, but identify their work most closely with be healthy, stay safe, and enjoy and achieve, as well as committing to the local Children's Fund target of being able to access services at a neighbourhood level (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

4.10.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

Sue, a single parent, has two children, Lewis, aged 9 years, and George, who is 7 years old. Lewis was diagnosed with ADHD when he was 5 years old and at the time that the project became involved, he had extreme behaviour problems, with which his mother and his mainstream schools were struggling to cope. Sue reported that Lewis could be obstinate, disobedient and violent when angry and his behaviour was often frightening for his younger brother, with whom he shared a bedroom.

Lewis had been excluded from two primary schools prior to his contact with the service and was unhappy in the school from which he was referred. He was underachieving at school due to his unwillingness to engage with the work and had developed a broader dislike of the school and the staff who worked there. Sue described the stress this caused:

'As a parent it's such a heart rending thing to have to get this phone call, "You're needed to come in [to school]," you know, "he's done X, Y and Z." It's just a big, big struggle.'

Lewis' self-esteem had deteriorated following exclusions from school and his mother considered that his perception that he was different from the other children led to a sense of isolation:

‘When he left the first school he was about 6 and he was like, “Why can’t I be like everybody else? I wish I’d never been born,” which is a big thing for a 6 year old to think. And again when he left the [school] he was really humiliated in the same sort of way. I mean he said, “I wish I was dead.”’

Sue was suffering from anxiety and stress herself, and believed that she was moderately depressed. She was forced to give up her degree course and perceived that she was fighting against the statutory services to receive the support she needed.

Following Lewis’ second exclusion, the head teacher put Sue in touch with a link worker from the project. Sue said that she was able to open up to her immediately and found her friendly and helpful. The project identified several objectives for the family once they had established a relationship with them. The link worker recognised that the family needed to be re-housed and that Sue would need support negotiating with social services, Lewis’ school, and Lewis’ father, from whom Sue was estranged. Later, following intensive one-to-one sessions with Lewis, the link worker also identified a need to investigate the causes of Lewis’ behavioural difficulties.

4.10.2 Nature of the family’s involvement

The service initially delivered intensive support to Sue and her family. At the time of the interview, the support was ongoing, but was less intensive and available on a needs basis. As well as one-to-one support, the project has also provided practical help and mediation services.

4.10.2.1 One-to-one support

Initially, Sue met with the link worker at Lewis’ school on a weekly basis. Sue was able to talk about difficulties arising from Lewis’ behaviour and concerns she had about the welfare of both of her children. The link worker provided information for Sue about other sources of support and also offered practical help and assistance in Sue’s communication with statutory services.

Sue continues to see the link worker, either at the project’s offices or at the coffee morning run from Lewis’ old school. The link worker has been able to provide information for Sue such as details for holiday clubs and activities and has helped her to identify suitable after school activities for Lewis that will assist his social integration.

Sue continues to receive encouragement and support in managing Lewis' behaviour from the link worker. She said:

'If I'm losing track and I'm thinking, "What am I doing?" she's good at saying, "Well, you know what you have to do," and sort of reiterating the systems we've got.'

Although most of the discussions tended to centre on the children, the link worker also offered emotional support when Sue had personal concerns:

'I had to give up my physiotherapy degree so, you know, that was quite upsetting obviously, so, you know, she talked to me about that kind of thing as well.'

This emotional support was valued by Sue, who said that it felt good to have someone who understood her difficulties.

While still attending mainstream school, Lewis also met with the link worker on a weekly basis, during school hours. Lewis reported that they would talk about *anything* but usually about what was occurring at school. The basis of most sessions was communicated to Sue, who understood that the conversation would centre on events or issues that had occurred that day. Sue perceived that Lewis liked the link worker, and that he *'thought fondly of her.'* She said:

'It must have gone well because Lewis hated school, but he liked the link worker. He hadn't associated the two together.'

It was following some of these early sessions that the link worker identified the need to investigate the causes of Lewis' behavioural difficulties, leading to the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome.

4.10.2.2 Mediation with Lewis' father

Sue had experienced a difficult break up with Lewis' father, Stuart, with whom she had a problematic relationship following their separation. She was experiencing difficulties communicating with him about Lewis' needs: Sue perceived that Stuart had difficulty accepting Lewis' condition and during his contact with his son, did not maintain the routine that Lewis' needed in order to manage his behavioural problems.

The link worker identified a need to support Stuart in his care of Lewis during his access visits, one of the main components being to ensure that Stuart established

regular meal times for Lewis because of his medication. Sue perceived that this mediation was helpful. In addition to the mediation between Sue and Stuart, the project also assisted Stuart with a homelessness application, which led to his being declared homeless, enabling him to obtain the necessary support.

4.10.2.3 Liaison with statutory services

The link worker's expertise ensured that Sue was given information regarding her rights in relation to social housing, benefits, and Lewis' schooling. Sue reported that she had experienced difficulties communicating with the school as she felt intimidated by their authority. The link worker was able to liaise with the school on Sue's behalf and ensure that Sue's point of view was heard. Sue was happy with the way that the link worker represented her:

'I'm not very assertive when I'm in a group of authority figures so I find it difficult getting my points over to the head teacher. So the link worker would come and help me with that, and make sure that my views would get across in any meetings, and she was good at that.'

Following the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome, Sue decided that Lewis would benefit from moving from mainstream school to a school better equipped to deal with his specific needs. The link worker supported Sue and Lewis through this process, helping Sue to identify an appropriate school and accompanying her on her exploratory visit. Sue perceived that the link worker's support maintained her motivation for the daunting process of securing a new school place for Lewis:

'Support from the link worker was definitely a positive thing, it definitely helped keep me with that drive and keep me moving rather than giving up which I'd got close to.'

The link worker also played an important role in securing improved accommodation for Sue. As the two boys had experienced difficulties sharing a bedroom, Sue considered that separate bedrooms would give both Lewis and George the space they needed. The link worker was able to contact the local housing trust on Sue's behalf and ensure that her case for a three bedroom house was given consideration. Sue was positive about the link worker's perseverance with the housing trust and very happy with the house she eventually obtained – a three bedroom house with outdoor space for the boys to play.

4.10.3 The impact of the service

The practical outcomes achieved (Lewis' place in a new school and the family's relocation to new housing) had a big impact on this family's life. Sue considered that the support that Lewis has received from his new school has improved his behaviour and academic achievement. The enhanced living environment has also reduced the amount of stress in the household which has benefited the whole family. The personal support Sue received from the project also has reduced her level of stress and given her new strength to deal with Lewis' sometimes difficult behaviour.

4.10.3.1 Achievement

Lewis' academic achievement had improved since leaving mainstream education. Sue perceived that the new school offered a more suitable structure for Lewis' needs; providing the fixed routine that he required. The smaller class sizes were of benefit to him and facilitated his improved academic achievement. Sue also attributed his achievements to a greater level of motivation, facilitated by his newfound enjoyment of school:

'He's finally achieving, I mean in school ... I've just had ... the annual review and they showed me his curriculum levels, he's already at Level 4 ... which I believe is above where he should be, which you know shows that intelligent side of him. And he's working and he's enjoying, some bits more than others, but he's enjoying it.'

Sue reported that Lewis was bringing work home for her to display, which had not been happening at his old school, where he was reluctant to complete any work, this reflected the increased confidence that he has begun to display in himself and his abilities.

4.10.3.2 Behaviour and self-esteem

Sue perceived that Lewis' level self-esteem had risen considerably as a result of his improved school achievement and social integration. Lewis' problems in school had previously led to a sense of social isolation, which was rectified by his move to a school geared to his needs. Lewis reported that he liked his new school because *'there are other children [there] with the same thing.'* Sue also said that Lewis was beginning to make comparisons between himself and a classmate with Asperger's syndrome.

The more organised routine of the new school improved Lewis' sense of well-being: Sue suggested that *'the more fixed routine he can have the happier and better he is.'* The established routine had also made the likelihood of emotional outbursts less likely; outbursts that were potentially dangerous and had often left Lewis feeling distressed. Sue said:

'He's less of a danger to other people now he's settled, the behaviour's settled down, you know, where he was throwing tables, throwing books, kicking people, biting ... he's done them all unfortunately. So, it's a shame because he's always upset afterwards, but it comes partly from the ADHD because he reacts, does something really bad and then when he realises what's happened, he's really upset.'

4.10.3.3 Home environment

The personal space created for Lewis and George in the three bedroom house had eased tensions at home for the family. Lewis reported that having his own room was the best thing about the new house. Sue perceived that the relationship between the two brothers had improved since this change, explaining that they enjoyed each other's company more as they are able to seek their own space when they need it. The location of the house, away from any busy roads, is also more suitable for Lewis' sometimes impulsive behaviour.

4.10.3.4 Motivation

Access to information about after school clubs or benefit entitlements enabled Sue to make changes that eased her living situation and the link worker's advocacy for Sue, both at school and with the housing trust, enabled her to secure outcomes that transformed Lewis' behaviour. Sue reported feeling a sense of despair with the education system that stemmed from her fear of authority and her own state of depression: the assistance offered by the link worker gave Sue renewed energy for the process of securing both better schooling for Lewis and a more appropriate living environment for both of her children.

4.10.4 Summary of outcomes

Sue and the link worker had been in agreement with regard to the priorities for this family; improving Lewis' schooling and the living environment at home. These two objectives were achieved with huge benefits for the family. The more explicit service

objectives of securing support for Lewis' father, and setting up Direct Payments from social services were also achieved.

The outcomes for this family can be summarised using the *Every Child Matters* framework: this is illustrated in Table 4.10.4.1 below.

Table 4.10.4.1 *Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Lewis has improved self-esteem. More regular meals when visiting his father improved the effectiveness of Lewis' medication.
Stay safe	Lewis is at less risk of violent behaviour at home and in school.
Enjoy and achieve	Lewis has achieved social inclusion at school. Lewis' academic achievement has improved.
Achieve economic well-being	Lewis' academic achievement has improved. Reduced pressure on Sue has led her to consider returning to higher education.

There was concurrence in the views expressed about the aspects of the service that the project and the family perceived had made a difference to their situation. The key factors appeared to be the diagnosis of Lewis' Asperger's Syndrome that was facilitated by the project and which led to the allocation of a place in a special school, and the worker's assistance that led to the family being re-housed into more suitable accommodation. Both the project worker and Sue also spoke about the value of the contact that the project had with Lewis' father. In addition, the family discussed in more detail the impact of the change in school and the way that Lewis had responded positively with changes to his behaviour and improved academic achievement.

4.10.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

The intensity of support offered to this family, as well as the good relationship with the link worker, facilitated the achievement of important practical changes for the family.

4.10.5.1 Project intensity and holistic approach

The project provided a holistic approach to supporting this family. Frequent contact with the link worker maintained Sue's motivation towards achieving improved schooling for Lewis and a more suitable house for the whole family. The link worker's intervention in these processes was cited, by Sue, as crucial to the success of this work and these practical outcomes have had a huge impact on the family. The link workers' availability during periods of difficult behaviour also ensured that Sue was supported in her efforts to maintain her systems for managing Lewis' behaviour.

4.10.5.2 Relationship with project staff

Sue's trust in the link worker enabled the worker to advocate on Sue's behalf to good effect. Sue perceived that the link worker had understood her family's needs and represented them well, with both the school and housing services. Mediation with Lewis' father was also reported to be successful, emphasising the effectiveness of communication between Sue and the link worker.

Sue felt able to communicate her needs to the link worker which ensured that she received the support that she required. The support from the link worker enabled Sue to maintain the level of motivation she needed to pursue the changes that she sought for her family.

Lewis' relationship with the link worker enabled a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome, which facilitated appropriate changes to be made to his education and his move to a school that has nurtured his abilities.

4.11 Case study 11 - supporting children and families (family and school support)

This family centre, based in the local community, has been delivering services since 1986 and has been part-funded by the Cheshire Children's Fund since 2003. Funding from Cheshire Children's Fund enabled the service to undertake more preventative work with families, establishing a dedicated room for children, children's groups and a morning household 'knock-up' scheme to target school absence and improve punctuality.

The service identifies its aims within the Cheshire Children's Fund Operational and Strategic Plan as helping to build up responses for children and families showing early

signs of difficulty (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005). The target population is those families who fall outside the threshold for statutory intervention. The service also aims to undertake joint work with schools, children's centres and other agencies. Around 50% of referrals to the project come from schools.

The children's groups are run after school from the children's room. Groups are restricted to three or four children and are usually single sex to enable children to pursue shared interests. The children have the opportunity to play games, do homework, and chat informally with a support worker. Support workers will have identified the needs of each child with an individual assessment when they first attend the group in order to determine the nature of the work undertaken with the child. Targets, such as building self-esteem, will be tackled through the activities undertaken at the group and some one-to-one work with the child.

The service identifies three primary *Every Child Matters* outcomes within their work: be healthy, stay safe, and enjoy and achieve. The service also identifies as a target the Cheshire goal: be able to access services at a neighbourhood level (Cheshire Children's Fund, 2005).

4.11.1 Circumstances leading to the family's involvement

Karen and her family had been accessing services at the centre intermittently on an informal basis for the last 10 years, attending a mother and toddler group, family activity days and family excursions. They became more closely involved with the project in November 2006 when Karen was experiencing domestic violence and a referral was made to the service for Joshua, Karen's eldest child, by his school. The school was concerned about Joshua's attendance and about the impact that the home situation was having on his behaviour.

Karen perceived that it was a chance encounter with a support worker undertaking outreach work in the community that prompted her to become more involved with the centre. The support worker was already known to Karen, which appeared to facilitate the development of formal support for her family. This encounter took place at a similar time to Joshua's referral to the service.

Karen said that she was going through a very bad time when Joshua was referred to the centre. She described feelings of despair and helplessness that left her unable to get up in the mornings:

'I couldn't even be bothered getting up I was that bad in myself, I'd lost it all, lost everything and I just wanted to sleep all the time. And when you've got two kids you can't do that, simple. And I forgot that.'

Karen described Joshua as distressed and unhappy at this time, which she later related to her own distress and unhappiness. Joshua, who was 10 years old, was assuming many of Karen's parenting responsibilities for his younger sister, now aged 5 years. Communication between Karen and Joshua had broken down and there was a bad atmosphere in the house, which Karen perceived to be a consequence of the violence that he had witnessed. She said:

'My son couldn't even talk, we could talk to each other but like what he's seen and what I was going through ... we wasn't ourselves together.'

Joshua's description of his behaviour at this time also illustrates the difficulties he was experiencing with self-expression:

'I'd be like dead moody and shouting at people all the time. At school if I ever got wound up, I hit people in a temper and I can't help it.'

Following an individual assessment, the project identified a need for Joshua to have space to relax and talk to someone about his concerns in order to improve his self-esteem and confidence. A male support worker was recruited by the project to provide a positive male role model for Joshua. The project also aimed to provide support to improve Joshua's school attendance and punctuality.

A holistic approach to working with the family was adopted by the project and Karen was encouraged to attend one-to-one sessions with her own support worker to address her experiences and worries about the violence within her relationship.

4.11.2 Nature of family's involvement

The family have continued to be involved with the excursions organised by the centre but since the referral was made, Karen and Joshua have also received one-to-one support and used the weekday morning 'knock-up' scheme.

4.11.2.1 One-to-one support

Karen was referred to a domestic violence counsellor by the project and has a one-to-one session each week. To begin with, Karen said that these sessions were not something that she found easy:

'I was a bit nervous at first, bit dubious, I was scared as well because I'm a very proud person. Since I've started talking to [the support worker] I've started opening up about myself.'

Karen said that she has been able to talk about her past with the support worker and the things that had been happening at home. She perceived that these conversations had enabled her to get her self-esteem and confidence back. The sessions have also included discussion about her two children, which Karen says has helped her to improve their situation at home:

'Joshua was looking after my little girl and it wasn't right for my baby to do that, he's only a kid himself, he's only 10 ... And then I was coming here and it made me realise that you know, I was putting too much pressure on my little lad, not realising I was doing it because I was so down and so depressed.'

At the end of each session, the support worker and Karen talked through and recorded the outcomes that had been discussed or achieved, relating them to the *Every Child Matters* framework. Karen said that she found this reflection on the discussion to be helpful:

'I look back on [the record] and I'll say things, and the week after I'll read it and when I look, I would change from that one week to this week and you see a little change each week. And you can actually see and I can see it as well.'

Joshua has weekly one-to-one support sessions with a male support worker at the centre. Karen considered that it was important for Joshua to have someone to talk to in confidence as she recognised his reluctance to open up to her about the violence he had witnessed. Karen perceived that this was due to Joshua's fear of upsetting her. She also felt that it was important for him to have access to a male to talk to:

'[the project] brought [a male worker] in for Joshua to speak to. I don't think he would have spoken to a girl. But Dave, they've bonded, he likes Dave very much. He can open up to Dave.'

The content of the support worker's sessions with Joshua remains confidential, which Karen perceived as important for Joshua. Karen reported that Joshua would sometimes

share what had been said with her but usually preferred to protect the privacy of this space he had been given. Karen appeared satisfied with this arrangement and suggested that it was something that Joshua wanted to maintain:

'This is his secret ... it's his little thing he's got for him and Dave ... He tells me if he wants to tell me, but I don't ask much because it's like his little secret.'

Joshua talked about the sessions with his support worker. He said that they usually involved indoor and outdoor activities, such as board games or football, as well as talking about his feelings. While he seemed to enjoy these activities, Joshua said it was sometimes difficult to forgo playing with his friends to attend a session at the centre.

Joshua stated that he found it difficult to talk about his feelings but said that he '*draw[s] about things*' during the sessions. Although Karen did not mention Joshua's pictures from the sessions, she said that Joshua's drawings at home often helped her to understand how he was feeling.

4.11.2.2 The 'knock-up' scheme

Every weekday morning, a support worker calls at the family's house to give them a morning call. The purpose of the visit is to provide practical support which ensures that the family are up and ready to leave for school, thus reinforcing on a daily basis the importance of attendance and punctuality. Support workers liaise with school administration staff to ensure that children have attended registration.

Karen had difficulty accepting this scheme initially, as she felt that it reflected badly on her parenting ability:

'I was very embarrassed at first ... I thought people [that] do that, get knocked up, can't look after their kids properly, that's what I thought.'

Karen and Joshua agreed that the scheme has improved school attendance and punctuality for Joshua and his younger sister, a fact that the project confirmed. The morning calls appear to have become a routine part of life for Karen's family which she now happily accepts:

'I was late first time yesterday since they've been back to school because I was very, very drained. But usually the kids are on time usually, it does work ... I'm getting up early. And sometimes even before Jo has knocked on the door, "Jo, I'm up." [laughs]. Got to get up before Jo!'

4.11.2.3 Family activities/days out

Karen's family are still very much involved in the wider life of the centre and Joshua was able to recall several day trips he had been on. Karen appeared to value the activities and opportunity for fun afforded by the excursions. She said:

'I'm a fun person me and the youth club, and the centre, they go on trips I'm like well in, and like, we've done the duck race ... love it, getting dirty, wet I don't mind. [laughs] But it is fun, it's good for kids as well, this centre.'

When talking about the future, Karen hoped that her family's involvement in these activities would continue. She was particularly keen for her daughter to become involved with activities at the centre.

4.11.3 The impact of the service

Karen perceived that she had changed a great deal since her first formal contact with the centre. She identified a number of ways in which both she and Joshua benefited from the service they had received. Joshua also recognised that the service had made a difference to him.

4.11.3.1 Coping skills

Karen considered that she had learned to open up about her emotions with the support worker, which she thought was a good thing and had improved her relationships with other people:

'The centre's made me open up, realise that I can talk to other people and don't feel threatened by doing it, which is a good thing.'

Joshua had also learned alternatives to violence as a way of expressing his feelings. Karen reported that Joshua was very angry before using the service, an emotion he was expressing through fighting with his mum. Joshua reported that he used to shout and lose his temper if he became wound up but he recognised a change in this area of his behaviour since receiving support from the centre:

'I used to be, like, dead moody and now I'm not moody; I'm respectful to my mum, and now I'm like respectful to her.'

4.11.3.2 Confidence and self-esteem

Karen said that her self-esteem and confidence had increased dramatically since working with the service. This was exemplified in her declaration of her own increased self-worth and her abilities as a parent; she said that *'since we started coming here I'm better as a person, I'm better as a mum.'*

Being able to open up to her support worker appeared to give Karen the self-assurance to deal with other people, she said:

'Coming here has made me feel, I don't know, I feel so great, I've changed completely, I've got confidence I never had. I'll talk to people I couldn't talk to at one stage because I thought they were judging me. Yes, definitely worked, it's definitely worth coming here.'

Karen also said that her support worker, friends, and family members had commented on her increased confidence, which made her feel proud:

'Jo and, like, other people saying how they can see the difference in me. And like me mum, for instance, she says she can see a difference in me, I don't look so drawn, people see me with a smile now instead of a frown. And people complimenting me all the time, I feel proud of myself now [laughs]. It's things like that and every day I suppose more and more people keep noticing I was getting better, so I feel better in myself.'

Karen contrasted her previous inability to get up in the morning with her current *'happy'* state in a morning; she said, *'personally I think it's [one of] the best things I've ever done.'* Joshua also made a comparison with how he used to feel in the mornings, suggesting the significance of the daily morning contact with the service. Joshua said that he was less stressed in the mornings now:

'I've been feeling good about myself ... Like in the past I used to get stressed in the morning and now I've gone better. [I'm] like alive, like, dead jumpy and that.'

Karen said that she had noticed an increase in Joshua's self-confidence and his increasingly positive state of mind:

'I'd say he's got more confidence. He's come out of himself because he went right in himself, very quiet and that, and he went angry towards me and he was like blaming me which I suppose it was my fault in a way. But ... he's happy ... he's more happier.'

4.11.3.3 School attendance and punctuality

Karen perceived that the 'knock-up' scheme was working for her family and the project confirmed that the children's rate of school attendance had increased. In addition to this outcome for Joshua and his sister, Karen said that it also proved to be another means of reducing her level of stress:

[Joshua's] not getting letters all the time saying [about] his absence or ... I'm concerned about this child being late, blah, blah, blah. But now I'm getting no letters so that's the benefit off me head, you know so I mean, so I've stopped worrying and Joshua and [his sister] are always early for register.'

4.11.3.4 Family relationships

Since attending the one-to-one sessions at the centre, Karen suggested that the level and nature of communication between herself and Joshua had improved, leading to a better overall relationship, which Karen now described as 'happy.' She suggested that they are now more contented in one another's company and referred to the harmonious approach to household chores that they had been able to develop. Karen suggested that the changes that she had seen in herself had impacted on the whole household atmosphere:

'We're bonding as a family. Yeah we are ... it's me, I think, like I suppose I must be the key, I don't know, like Joshua, I'm very close to Joshua, very close to Joshua, he's me little rock; [my daughter's] close to me; so it's like a little vicious circle. And like me boyfriend, he's working full-time now so we're all happy, we're all happy at the moment. To me that keeps the family happy and if I was down, they was down.'

4.11.4 Summary of outcomes

Contact with the centre resulted in a number of outcomes for Karen and Joshua which fit into the *Every Child Matters* framework, as Table 4.11.4.1 below illustrates. These were identified by Karen, Joshua and the support worker. The service's objectives for Joshua's school attendance and self-esteem were achieved, as well as their objective for providing support to deal with domestic violence.

Table 4.11.4.1 ***Every Child Matters* outcomes and project activities**

ECM outcome	Project activity
Be healthy	Karen and Joshua have improved self-esteem. Joshua has improved his anger management.
Stay safe	Karen has received support to deal with domestic violence.
Enjoy and achieve	Both children's school attendance and punctuality has improved. The family have participated in excursions from the centre.

In looking at the similarities and discrepancies in the views expressed by the project staff and the family about the difference that the service had made, they agreed that the children were now more punctual and more likely to attend school. They also agreed about the positive impact of the one-to-one work with Joshua, support which had encouraged in the development of coping strategies, improved self-esteem and a more positive outlook. In addition, Karen spoke at length about the difference that the one-to-one support that she had accessed through the project had made to her own self-confidence and ability to cope; she also suggested that their contact with the project had led to better family relationships and a more harmonious atmosphere at home.

4.11.5 Factors that enabled the service to work for this family

There were a number of factors that led to successful outcomes for this family. Of particular importance were the development of good relationships with the individual support workers and the frequency of their contact with staff.

4.11.5.1 Relationship with project staff

The established presence of the project within the local community helped to spark the family's renewed involvement. And once Joshua's referral to the project had been made, Karen's familiarity with both the centre and staff appeared to facilitate the process of opening up to her support worker.

Karen's trust in staff was exemplified by her request to have her support worker present for the research interview and her repeated calls upon the support worker to corroborate her observations during the interview attest to Karen's respect for her. Karen also stated

that the support workers' recognition of her own self-improvement gave her reason to feel proud of herself.

The trust Karen felt in the centre also extended to her feelings about the support that Joshua received during his one-to-one sessions with his support worker. Karen was happy with the confidentiality of the relationship between Joshua and his support worker and reported that she *'trusts the centre 100%.'* Karen perceived that the strong relationship between Joshua and his support worker had helped him to open up and said that the fact that it was a man had facilitated this.

4.11.5.2 Project intensity

The 'knock-up scheme' is still being used by the family. Karen referred to the call that they received each morning as motivation to get up on time and, over time, the presence of this service had transformed the daily routine in her household. When Karen talked about the progress that she and her family had achieved, she referred to the constancy of the encouragement from her support worker and other members of staff, and said that is had contributed to her personal progress.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The preceding case studies illustrate the involvement of 11 families with services funded through Cheshire Children's Fund; they were selected to reflect work that had a positive impact for the service users with the aim of establishing how and why that particular provision had been successful for them. This chapter discusses the limitations of the research design and describes the breadth of the case studies that were included. It draws together, with reference to other literature, the findings in relation to the impacts for the children/young people and their families and then explores the key characteristics of the service provision that contributed to a positive outcome. The chapter concludes by discussing how the findings of this research relate to the objectives of the Children's Fund and *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

5.2 The research design

The projects included in this research were purposively sampled to ensure that a range of innovative services were investigated: the families were also purposively sampled according to the agency's perception of the positive impact of their involvement. The research does not, therefore, provide a representative view of family experiences of Children's Fund activities but instead provides an in-depth exploration of the factors that contributed to successful outcomes for specific families.

The case study methodology allowed the researchers to explore the circumstances of each family's involvement from a range of perspectives. The family questionnaire, completed by the project, was rendered more useful by prior contact between project staff and researchers at the agency interview. The interview provided an opportunity to elucidate the research objectives and to improve researcher knowledge of the project's work: this helped the project in identifying suitable families that they could contact for participation and in the completion of the questionnaire. The background information collected prior to the family interviews provided a frame of reference, enabling the researchers to question respondents, with allusion to specific activities and events.

As well as enabling in-depth exploration, the use of multiple data sources lessened the likelihood of factual inaccuracies appearing within the case studies by allowing the researchers to compare the accounts of staff, children/young people and their parents. Where factual discrepancies were identified, information was clarified with project staff who made investigations with families where necessary. In addition, researchers were able to explore areas of agreement and discrepancy between each respondent's interpretation of events and impacts.

The semi-structured nature of the agency and family interviews allowed respondents to discuss, to a large degree, topics that were important to them. This facilitated active respondent participation in the interview and ensured that key information was not lost, which was crucial to achieving the research aims of investigating impact and identifying its facilitating factors.

Use of a multiple case study approach enabled researchers to identify similarities and differences across a range of Children's Fund projects for a range of families. The identification of emerging themes across the projects renders the research more useful in its application to policy, practice and service development.

5.3 Diversity and similarities in the case studies

The research included projects that were providing a variety of services under the remit of the Children's Fund and, as the discussion below illustrates, the families that were selected also varied in terms of their composition and needs, and in the services that they accessed.

5.3.1 The projects

All of the organisations in which these projects were based existed before the advent of the Children's Fund: in each case, additional elements of the service were developed and posts created in response to the availability of this new funding stream. These new provisions were based within both the voluntary and statutory sectors, including one instance when funding was granted to a voluntary organisation through a Children's Fund project located within the local authority. Seven of the case study projects were located within voluntary organisations, two in schools and two within Primary Care Trusts.

Although all of the projects filled identified gaps in local provision, they did vary in the extent to which they were a completely new area of work for the organisation, an extension of their current work or a replication of something that was operational in another locality. As a result, there were differences in the existing infrastructure, experience and resources within each organisation that were available to the project staff and to the children/young people and families who accessed their services.

The range of backgrounds from which the services emerged demonstrates that a variety of circumstances lead to the development of projects that had a positive impact upon the children/young people and families with whom they worked.

5.3.2 The families

Each of the projects selected one family to be involved in the research. As with the projects themselves, it was not intended to be a representative sample but one that reflected instances where there had been a positive impact for the family and/or the child/young person.

With the exception of one case study, two or more members of the family accessed the services that were provided by the Children's Fund project: the service users, in addition to the child or young person who was originally referred, included siblings (usually younger siblings) and parents. Mothers were more likely to be involved than fathers and in more than half of the case studies, the families were headed by a single parent. The family where only one child was involved with the service was a young person's consultation project accessed through the boy's school.

The children/young people who were the main subject of the case studies covered the whole age range targeted by the Children's Fund: they were between 5 and 13 years old when they first became involved with the service and all but one was male.

As with the range of backgrounds from which the projects emerged, the composition of the families and each member's involvement with the Children's Fund projects varied but an important factor reported in the majority of the case studies was the opportunity for other family members to become actively involved even though they were not the person who was originally referred to the project. It was suggested by a number of families that whole family approach was a contributing factor to the positive impact of many of these services.

5.3.3 Reason for involvement

In six of the 11 case studies, the school or education authority was involved in the referral to the project: two of the remaining families were self referrals, two were signposted to the service by other professionals (a carer and a health visitor) and one child automatically received the service when his family entered a refuge.

In most of the case studies, there was more than one reason for the referral to the projects, an indication of the breadth of the needs of the children/young people concerned. The referrals that were made by schools or with the involvement of the education authority were usually a result of poor behaviour and/or attendance, although in one instance a child was put forward for a consultation project solely to facilitate his personal development. Five of the children/young people were referred to projects that provided opportunities for social interaction: in two cases the primary reason for the referral was to enable disabled children to become involved in leisure activities whilst for the other three families, the activities provided a forum for personal development and also enabled them to access one-to-one support. In two instances, there was an additional incentive to provide respite for other family members.

In addition to the reasons that were given at the time of the referral, work with the child or family often revealed other unmet needs. The length of each family's involvement, the intensity of the support available and the flexibility of the services allowed projects to respond to additional needs as they arose.

Involvement with the projects appeared to be without stigma and in only two of the case studies was there an initial reluctance from parents about their children becoming involved. This was, however, soon overcome when the reasons that their children had been referred to the service were made clear: the development of relationships between project workers and parents often began at this early stage.

5.3.4 Length of involvement

The Children's Fund projects included in the research were asked to select families for whom their service had had a positive impact – it was not stipulated whether the members of the family should currently be using the service or whether their involvement should have come to an end. In 9 of the 11 case studies, at least one member of the family was still accessing the service provided by the project: in the remaining two cases, one child ceased to receive the service when the family was re-

housed and the involvement of the other ended when a number of short-term consultation projects were completed. The total length of time that the families had been in contact with the projects to date ranged from 1 to 6 years, with an average of 2½ years per family.

The longevity of their involvement suggests that it can take time to make a real difference to the lives of children/young people and families. The majority of the projects that were included in the case studies appeared to continue to work with the families until the service users decided that they no longer needed that contact, although a number of projects did speak about the systems that they had in place to regularly review the progress of their work with a child/young person.

5.3.5 Service received

The type of service received by the children/young people and families ranged from practical help and personal support to information and access to other provision, including leisure opportunities. Whilst the reason for referral and thus the focus of the service provided varied widely, a common feature was that services were usually offered through a combination of individual and group activities. Across the case studies, these activities included the following:

- access to funding;
- consultation exercises;
- drop-in groups;
- individual school lessons;
- information giving;
- leisure activity clubs;
- leisure trips, outings and residential visits;
- mediation;
- one-to-one support or counselling;
- personal development courses;
- practical help (such as assistance to get to school);
- referral to other groups or services.

In nine of the 11 case studies, the availability of one-to-one support was an integral element of the service but in each of these cases, other provision, such as leisure activities or drop-in groups, were also accessed by the service user. These other

activities could provide an easy way into the service for the child/young person or family as they were designed to be enjoyable and non-threatening: once attending the leisure activities, the service users developed positive relationships with peers and project workers, thus facilitating positive interaction and also enabling staff to introduce other elements of the service. One implication of this strategy is that it often takes time before the more individualised work begins.

5.4 The impact for individual families

The individual case studies illustrated the outcomes that each of the families and service providers attributed to their involvement with the project. For the purposes of analysis, the impact of the experience of the children/young people and families involved can be broadly explored within the four domains of the individual, the family, at school, and within the community. The views expressed by the project workers, children/young people and parents are also compared in order to identify similarities and discrepancies in their interpretation of the impact of their involvement.

5.4.1 The individual

The case studies showed that the major impact of the Children's Fund services were the changes that the children/young people and their families described that related to themselves as individuals. Most frequently, they referred to improved self-confidence and the development of personal and coping skills whilst a smaller number of people talked more generally about an increased sense of personal well-being as an outcome of using the service.

The individual changes that were described, could be seen, in turn, as impacting upon the experience of each person within the domains of the family, school and the community. The children and young people expressed views which suggested a developing sense of control over their situation: as one aspect of their lives improved, the dynamics shifted in a more positive direction, thus making it more likely that other things would improve, revealing the interconnectedness of each domain of their lives.

5.4.2 The family

In five of the case studies, subjects specifically attributed improvements to their family lives to their involvement with the service. This was seen to be a consequence of a number of factors, including the contrary opportunities that the project activities had

provided to either spend time together or spend time away from each other. The improvements within individual families were also seen to be an outcome of the development of personal and coping skills that had enabled both younger and older members of the family to express themselves or respond more constructively to difficult situations.

5.4.3 School

The impact of involvement with the projects for some of the children/young people was improved attendance at school, better behaviour whilst they were there and greater achievement in their school and homework. A number of the young people (and parents) in the case studies also referred to the higher aspirations that they now had for the future as a result of their changed attitude to school and learning.

In addition to the very practical support which, in two cases, had resulted in improved attendance at school, the Children's Fund projects accessed by the children/young people had also offered one-to-one support and group activities which had helped them in their school life. Activities provided opportunities for social interaction and alongside the personal support that often increased levels of self-confidence and encouraged the development of social skills, children/young people were more able to become involved in, and make a positive contribution to, group situations such as those in the classroom. As in other spheres of their lives, the development of personal and coping skills had enabled some of the children/young people to respond more appropriately in stressful situations at school.

5.4.4 The community

The majority of the Children's Fund projects had enabled the children/young people in the case studies to become involved in group activities with other young people in their local community: this was also an outcome for some of the parents who had accessed services. The impact of this involvement in group activities was often a reduction in social isolation and, for some people, a perception that they were now able to contribute positively to their community. This was illustrated well by three individuals (one young person and two parents), who had taken on volunteering or mentoring roles and one young person who spoke about his increased awareness of the issues facing his community and who expressed empathy towards problems affecting other young people.

5.4.5 Similarities and discrepancies in perceptions of impact

The format of this research allowed all of the participants to speak about the impact of the family's involvement with the service, whether or not these outcomes were intended when they were first referred to the project. Although issues were identified at an early stage, the projects were often able to respond to changing needs and circumstances and adjust the intended outcomes accordingly.

In every case study there was general consensus between project staff and families regarding the nature of the impact of the project on the family; this may be, in part, due to the fact that during the course of their work, project staff and families had usually discussed the outcomes that had been achieved. In many cases, however, families were able to describe additional ways in which the project had impacted on their lives or to provide more detail and give more examples. Often, this supplementary information related to incidents that had taken place at home or it referred to family relationships, outcomes which the project workers may have been unaware of.

The children and young people interviewed expressed similar opinions to their parents with regard to the impact of services, though outcomes were sometimes described in different terms. The majority of the children and young people were able to cite examples of the project's impact on their life and some of the older children were able to describe how the project had impacted more widely on the whole family.

Where the focus of a service was work with a child or young person, project staff did not always describe the positive impact that parents had experienced. The interviews with parents indicated that some services had unintended benefits for parents and that positive outcomes for the child or young person had an impact on their parents. In one case study, for example, support for a young carer provided respite for his family who were finding his behaviour difficult to cope with. Parents also reported that they had observed more far reaching impacts than the projects: in one example, the project reported that a child had moved to a more appropriate school as the outcome but the child's mum spoke in detail about the personal changes that had occurred as a result of the move.

5.5 Timelines and the nature of impact

Although in the majority of the case studies, the projects were still working with the child/young person, the length of time since the first contact meant that both short and medium term impacts could usually be identified. For the purposes of this discussion, short term impacts were taken as the things that had changed or begun to change for the child/young person and their family within the first few months of contact. Medium term impacts were factors which had changed during the remaining time that they were service users whilst longer term impacts describe the ways that the work undertaken had made a difference months or years later.

The short term impacts that were reported in the case studies included getting involved in positive activities, respite for other members of the family and improved punctuality and attendance at school. The case studies also showed that the early phase of involvement with the project also resulted in children/young person or other family members feeling supported and less socially isolated.

The medium term impacts that were identified were associated primarily with the development of personal and social skills and the individual's sense of well-being. Regular involvement in group activities, courses and one-to-one support provided the means by which the children/young people, and in some cases their parents, acquired coping skills, modified their behaviour, improved their social skills and increased in self-confidence. Some children/young people reported that their involvement with the projects had also widened their horizons and led them to develop new interests.

The long term impacts of the involvement of these families with the projects are harder to identify, both because the majority of the participants continued to access the services, and because of the relatively short timescale from the referral to the time when the research was carried out. Some of the children/young people and their parents were, however, already able to identify actual or potential long term benefits: these included changing aspirations and the consideration of a broader range of career options, access to volunteering and other developmental opportunities, and the ongoing impact of a more stable home environment.

It was also clear that the descriptions of the short and medium term impacts pointed towards the potential for long term benefits which would be a result of shifting a child's trajectory over a period of time. Attributing impact to specific intervention, however,

becomes more difficult as time progresses and relies increasingly on the perception of the individuals concerned rather than specific measures that can be traced back to the work of a particular service.

All of the impacts that have been realised to date have evolved over time through a process of experiences and interactions with project workers and other participants. The outcome of these interactions has been to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors and enabled the development of resilience in an incremental way.

5.6 How services made an impact

The means by which projects such as those described in this research made a difference to the families they were working with can be examined within the framework of risk and protective factors and the development of resilience.

5.6.1 Risk factors

Although, as the case studies illustrate, some risk factors were readily identifiable at the point of referral, other risk factors became apparent over a period of time as the project workers became involved with and got to know the individual(s) concerned. There were a range of risk factors present for the children/young people in the case studies. Some risk factors were present for more than one child and some children/young people were exposed to more than one of the following risk factors:

- academic achievement below potential;
- aggressive or angry behaviour;
- excessive caring responsibilities;
- changed schools at time other than transition;
- difficult behaviour at home, at school and /or in the community;
- domestic violence at home;
- family breakdown;
- living in a single parent household;
- living in a workless household;
- living in inappropriate accommodation;
- low level of self-confidence;
- not receiving appropriate guidance and discipline at home;
- poor attendance at school;
- poor communication skills.

The case studies illustrate that the work undertaken by the projects with children and young people, and in some cases parents, was either explicitly or implicitly aimed at eliminating or reducing the presence of specific risks. This included, for example, practical support to assist parents in getting their children to school, working with children/young people to develop strategies to improve their behaviour and the provision of diversionary groups or leisure activities that encouraged alternative interests. In addition to the opportunities presented for the development of personal and social skills in group settings, one-to-one support was also offered to allow children/young people and parents to talk about issues and devise coping strategies in order to alleviate risk factors such as poor communication skills, low self-confidence, angry or aggressive behaviour or inadequate parenting.

The findings from the case studies suggest that risk factors had been reduced for all of the participants. In some cases, these risk factors were specific and quantifiable, such as improving school attendance, whilst others, such as increasing self-confidence, are more difficult to measure but could impact upon children and young people in any arena of their lives: without the confidence to interact with others, for example, they might not succeed at school and might opt to spend their leisure time on their own. Projects were thus able to reduce the length of time that children/young people were exposed to risk factors and facilitate the development of protective factors and the development of resilience.

5.6.2 Protective factors and developing resilience

Some protective factors were present for each of the children/young people at the time of referral: the projects were thus able to enhance factors that were present and assist each individual to develop resilience through advice about skills or strategies that they could adopt. There were a range of protective factors that the projects were looking to develop for one or more of the children/young people in the case studies: these include the following:

- appropriate guidance and discipline at home;
- good attendance at school;
- good communication skills;
- happy and settled at school;
- high aspirations;
- positive peer relationships;
- positive relationship with parents;

-
- regular attendance at local clubs or activities;
 - supportive family network.

The services that were accessed by the children/young people and their families enabled them to develop stronger social networks as they were often meeting other children and parents at the projects with whom they formed relationships. The projects also worked with individuals to build resilience.

Building resilience can be seen as a process and the case studies illustrated that the enhancement of one protective factor or reduction of one risk factor often leads to a second change in a mutually reinforcing way. Children/young people reported, for example, that getting involved in new structured activities resulted in an increase in confidence: this was, in turn, likely to lead to other things that can also have beneficial outcomes such as enhanced communication skills and becoming more happy and settled at school.

A common approach adopted by the case study projects was not to take the child/young person in isolation but to place their circumstances within the context in which they lived. Holistic approaches were adopted that took into account and, where relevant involved, other members of the family: changing the behaviour of parents was a crucial element in the reduction or elimination of particular risk factors and in ensuring the development of protective factors. The analysis of the case studies suggested that the way projects facilitated the development of resilience within the whole family ensured, in particular, more supportive relationships and a more secure home environment. The family unit appeared to be central to the instigation of protective factors and the development of resilience. This evidence points towards the interactive model, discussed in Chapter 2, as a useful way of explaining the relationship between risk and protective factors.

5.7 Key features of the services

The children/young people and families included in the case studies were thus able to respond to the intervention and the experience had a positive impact on their lives. An important aspect of the research was to ascertain whether there were common features in different projects that facilitated the positive impact experienced by these children/young people and their families.

5.7.1 Relationships with project staff

The most frequently occurring feature of the stories told by the families involved in the case studies were the descriptions of the relationships that children and parents had built up with specific project workers. The development of trust meant that parents and children/young people were able to share their experiences with project workers and were happy to take onboard support and advice that was offered.

The positive relationships between different family members and project workers resulted in some participants saying that they felt valued, a fact which served to increase their level of confidence and self-esteem. A number of parents also suggested that the relationships they had developed with project staff meant that they felt they were well-informed about all aspects of the service and activities that might be open to their families.

5.7.2 Intensity and longevity of support

Another aspect of provision which families highlighted as being an important contributory factor to the positive impact that the service had on their situation was the intensity and/or longevity of their involvement with the project. Whilst sometimes seen as distinct from each other, these two features were often linked by the families included in the case studies.

The contact between the service users and the project staff provided opportunities for the families to access support, advice and activities on a frequent and regular basis. For the children and young people, it also provided a much needed routine, for both diversionary or leisure activities and, for some children/young people, to establish a pattern of regular attendance at school. The frequent contact with many of the families was governed by the needs that were expressed. It facilitated the development of positive relationships and enabled the staff to reinforce their work in a timely fashion.

All of the families included in the case studies had been accessing the Children's Fund services for more than a year. Families suggested that the longevity of the projects was an important factor that encouraged them to invest in the development of their relationships with project workers and with the other people who participated in the groups and activities.

5.7.3 Holistic approach and breadth of service

A third feature of the experiences elicited from the case studies was the importance of the holistic approach that was adopted within the projects and the range of services that were offered. Individuals or specific issues were not seen in isolation and the projects were able to be flexible and respond to the diversity of needs that a child/young person's situation presented.

Specific reasons were given for the initial involvement of each of the children/young people with the projects but there were sometimes a number of additional underlying issues or unmet needs which required attention. Projects were often able to address the wider needs of children/young people by offering a range of services and by involving additional family members such as parents and siblings. The generally high level of contact between the project workers and the family also meant that parents were aware of the work that the project was undertaking with their children, even if they were not directly involved.

The breadth of the activities that were offered by many of the projects meant that service users could access less intensive services first, such as drop-in or leisure activities, enabling them to build up relationships with staff before taking up one-to-one support or personal development courses. The range of activities or breadth of service that could be offered also meant that children/young people could be introduced to appropriate provision as their needs were identified.

5.8 Children's Fund and Every Child Matters

The case studies examined the impact that the projects had on the lives of individual children/young people and their families. The work undertaken by the projects with these families and the outcomes achieved can also be considered against the aims of the funding body, the Children's Fund, and the *Every Child Matters* framework.

5.8.1 Children's Fund aims

The underlying aim of the Children's Fund is that projects should identify children at risk of exclusion at an early stage and ensure they receive the help and support they need. Prevention, along with partnership and participation, is an underlying principle of the Fund.

5.8.1.1 Prevention

The services accessed by the children and families in the case studies were targeted towards people in specific circumstances or with identified needs rather than being universal services available to anyone within a particular locality. Most of the children/young people were already, to an extent, excluded at the time of their referral as a result of their behaviour or circumstances. It is unlikely, however, that these needs would have disappeared and without the Children's Fund provision being available, their needs may not have been met until the occurrence of a more significant event. The issues which led to the referral, and for some people, other unmet needs that were latterly identified, were therefore addressed earlier stage and in a holistic way that may not have otherwise been available.

The wider family involvement meant that the work of the projects could be said to be genuinely preventative for a number of younger siblings: the research found that the impact of service on parents or families as a whole meant that new attitudes, patterns of behaviour and routines were introduced so that younger brothers and sisters were less likely to face the same circumstances as had the older children in the household.

5.8.1.2 Partnership

Partnership working was evident in a number of the case studies. The positive outcomes for the children/young people were in some instances made possible by the formal or informal contact the project also had with parents (see Section 5.6.3), and as a result of the service's liaison with other agencies such as an after-school club, leisure services and a housing authority. Schools, however, were the most frequently mentioned partner agency as a source of referrals and in supporting the work with young people.

5.8.1.3 Participation

The focus of the research did not specifically allow for the exploration of participation and community capacity building. It was evident, however, that the involvement of children and families in these Children's Fund services resulted in some people realising they had the capacity and ability to make a contribution to their communities by volunteering, mentoring, involvement in consultation or employment.

5.8.2 Every Child Matters

The *Every Child Matters* framework proved to be a useful tool in summarising the outcomes of each of the projects. The children/young people, parents and agencies were, after speaking about the impact of the project, asked to consider what had been achieved for each family under each of the five outcomes.

5.8.2.1 Be healthy

In all of the case studies, examples were given to demonstrate that the projects were enabling the children/young people and sometimes their wider family to 'be healthy.' Increased physical activity, a rising awareness about healthy eating and drug education, improved psychosocial health, and the facilitation of medical examinations or attendance at hospital appointments were all mentioned.

5.8.2.2 Stay safe

Participants in nine of the case studies referred to the way that their involvement with the projects had allowed children and young people to 'stay safe.' Examples included the provision of age-appropriate activities within a safe and secure environment (particularly for disabled children), the development of coping skills to reduce the incidence of violent behaviour at home and at school, and support to deal with the effects of domestic violence.

5.8.2.3 Enjoy and achieve

Children/young people and families in all of the case studies spoke about the way in which the projects had enabled them to 'enjoy and achieve.' The examples that were given often related to enjoying and achieving whilst taking part in the activities within the projects but families then spoke about the way that their involvement in positive activities had transferred to positive experiences in other groups and situations.

The children/young people had enjoyed their participation in many of the activities that had been provided or facilitated by the projects: their involvement in these activities, and frequently the additional one-to-one support they had received, had resulted in personal and social development which changed their lives at school. Children/young people spoke about the way that they were now more involved in school life, had more friends, received positive feedback from teachers, had higher levels of concentration

and were better behaved. In two cases, the interventions were specifically designed to increase punctuality and attendance at school and these outcomes had been successfully achieved.

In addition to the changes to the lives of individual children or young people, four families also said that they now enjoyed spending more leisure time together as a result of their involvement with the project.

5.8.2.4 Make a positive contribution

Participants in seven of the case studies gave examples where their work with the project had made a difference within the context of 'making a positive contribution.' In some cases, an increase in the child/young person's level of self-confidence had enabled them to increase their involvement in activities at school and in the community. Examples were also given of young people and parents who had adopted new roles in the projects as mentors, volunteers or 'ambassadors.'

5.8.2.5 Achieve economic well-being

In nine of the case studies, children/young people, the families or the projects workers suggested that there was evidence of achievements which fall under the heading of 'achieve economic well-being.' Across the case studies, five family members suggested that they had gained in confidence and experience through their involvement with the projects and now felt that they had widened their career options. Other participants were now more focussed at school and saw this as a way of increasing the opportunities that would be open to them in the future: one family was now able to access additional benefits and two families were successfully re-housed in the community whilst they were involved with the projects.

The *Every Child Matters* outcomes did prove to be a useful tool for collating many of the outcomes of the projects for the children/young people and their families. When drawn together, the information placed under the outcomes illustrated the breadth of impact of the involvement of Children's Fund projects upon these service users.

5.9 Conclusion

The information presented in the case studies and the preceding discussion within this chapter illustrates that the Children's Fund projects included within this research have

had a positive impact upon these families. This report was able to present a qualitative analysis of the impact for each child/young person and collate the individual data to give a broader picture which illustrated the key similarities and differences across the case studies. The concluding chapter of this report captures the learning from this research.

Chapter 6

Capturing the learning from the research

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the learning from the research. It highlights the factors that children, young people and families identified as being central to the services having made a difference to their lives and points to the way that impact can be measured in the future. These findings have implications for the development and operation of services to this population.

6.2 Making a difference

The factors which were central to the services having made a difference to the lives of these children and families are summarised below. There are, however, a variety of policy and practice implications if projects are to respond to all of their service users in an effective way, in order to have a positive impact.

- **Relationships with individual members of staff**

Individual family members were helped and motivated by particular project workers with whom they had developed trusting relationships. Services need to consider how these relationships can be developed and maintained within the context of the variety of services that are provided, and how transition is managed when a member of staff leaves or when it is time for a child/young person to move on from the service.

- **Intensity of contact**

Children/young people and parents often described the positive impact of their frequent contact with the project. For some people it provided a welcome routine and they appreciated the easy access they had to members of staff. This does, however, have implications for the number of service users a project can support at any one time.

- **Longevity of service**

The families included in the case studies were able to develop meaningful relationships with staff because they often received a service for a prolonged period of time. For families using most of these services, there was not a pre-determined end point. There might, therefore, be an increasing tension between the length of time and intensity with

which children/young people and families need to access a service, the potential for creating dependency and the capacity of the project to accept new referrals.

- **Holistic approaches and breadth of service**

An important factor in many of the case studies was the whole family approach that was adopted, either formally or informally, by the projects. There was a perception that services were not offered to the child/young person in isolation but that siblings and parents could also be involved in or, at the very least kept informed, about the work being undertaken. The range of individual and group activities offered by many of the projects meant that there were opportunities for both children and adults to be involved, involvement that could impact upon the child/young person through the improvement of the situation of the whole family.

- **Responding to unidentified needs**

The longevity, intensity and flexibility of the projects often enabled them, over time, to identify and respond to needs that were not identified at the time of the referral. The length of involvement and the range of services offered meant that projects could recommend different elements of the service to children and young people, and sometimes their parents, as their situation changed or further needs were identified.

6.3 Measuring the difference

The act of measuring or demonstrating the impact of a service may be undertaken as part of an organisation's internal strategy or it may be a requirement of external forces, often a funding body. Both qualitative and quantitative information can have a role in illustrating the difference that services have made, but to do this, the purpose of the evaluation should be clear and systems for the collection and analysis of the information must be in place at the appropriate time.

- **Risk and protective factors and developing resilience**

The application of the concept of risk and protective factors and the development of resilience was beneficial to this piece of research: one way that projects might look at impact would be through an assessment of the presence of risk and protective factors at different stages in their work with a child or young person.

A short questionnaire could be used to enable a project to identify the risk and protective factors that are present for a child/young person at the point of referral and

periodically thereafter: a tool could be developed using factors that are age-sensitive and weighted to ensure that the differential impact of various risk and protective factors are taken into account. Repeated use of a questionnaire such as this could be used to measure change over a period of time. Just one of the projects included in this research referred to their use of the Onset referral and assessment tool (Youth Justice Board, 2006) to identify risk and protective factors. For an alternative example of a questionnaire that could be developed, see Ward and Thurston, 2006.

- ***Every Child Matters* framework**

The *Every Child Matters* framework was also a useful tool for this research which helped the project workers, children/young people and parents think about the variety of ways that the service had made a difference to their lives. Performance monitoring templates, such as the one adopted by Cheshire Children's Fund, encourage projects to create local performance indicators that allow them to quantify the outcomes of their work in the five areas of be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

- **A dual approach**

The case studies presented in this report provided a qualitative perspective by describing, on a case by case basis, the impact that a service had for an individual family and the service processes that increased the likelihood of a positive outcome. This approach allowed for a wealth of data to be collected and analysed, an approach that was strengthened by the use of multiple case studies: these enabled the presentation of a broader perspective and emerging themes to be identified across the families. Both quantitative and qualitative information have a role in the presentation of a comprehensive picture of impact.

6.4 Conclusion

This study was designed to look at the way that projects funded by Cheshire Children's Fund could have a positive impact upon the lives of children, young people and their families.

Through information collected from project workers, children/young people and parents, the research found that there was a broad consensus about the impact of the family's involvement, although families were often more able to describe the resulting changes in greater detail and across all areas of their lives. The research also showed

that there were some common factors which resulted in a range of services having a positive impact for different families.

The research provided some evidence about the pathways for improving family life through the exploration of the way that a change in one area of an individual's life can have consequences for other domains. It also found that although some impacts were related to the reduction or elimination of specific risk factors, the difference that the service made was often a result of the enhancement of a range of protective factors and the development of resilience, both for the child/young person and for other members of the family.

Finally, as the study was placed within the context of Children's Fund objectives, it raises questions about the extent to which targeted services such as these can be preventative. Although the findings from the case studies suggest that issues were often tackled earlier than they would have otherwise been and that the intervention prevented them from getting worse, these children/young people were experiencing identifiable difficulties prior to the project's involvement. The projects were, however, during the course of their work with a family, also able to reveal and address additional needs that were unidentified at the time of the referral. There were also examples where the projects appear to have been preventative for young siblings as a result of both their peripheral involvement in services and the changes in family circumstances, the atmosphere at home or changes in behaviour of other family members that had occurred.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Participant information sheet for service providers

Information about Cheshire Children's Fund research

You have been invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why it is being done and what it will involve. Please read this sheet and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study for?

This research will look at the impact that services funded by Cheshire Children's Fund have had on the lives of children and families. The information will be used to learn from the different ways that projects have worked with children and families and try to understand how they might have helped them.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you work for one of the projects funded by Cheshire Children's Fund. We would also like one of the children/families you work with to be involved.

What will happen if I take part?

We would like to conduct a short interview to find out about the work within your organisation that is funded by Cheshire Children's Fund and to ask about how you set aims and objectives and measure outcomes in your work with children and families. We would like to tape the interview so that the researcher can listen carefully during the interview and accurately record what you say.

We would also like to talk to one family about the impact of your work with them. After the interview we will ask you to identify a number of children who you have worked with in the last 6 months where there has been a positive impact. We will then approach one family at a time to see if they will consent to be interviewed. When a family has agreed to take part in the study, the remaining families will not be contacted. We will ask you to complete a short questionnaire about your work with the particular child/family so that we have a clear picture before we meet the child/family and so we can understand impact from a variety of perspectives.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a form to say you have had this information about the research. Even if you decide to take part, you can stop at any time and you don't have to give a reason.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

The research will increase our understanding about the impact of Cheshire Children's Fund projects upon the lives of children and families and help projects learn from the experiences of families. We do not think there are any disadvantages in taking part in the study.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Taking part is anonymous and no names or details that could identify you, the child or the family would ever be used in any reports.

What will happen to the results?

A report will be written for Cheshire Children's Fund who commissioned the work. This will also be available to you and we have offered to send a report summary to families who take part.

Who is paying for the evaluation?

The research is being paid for by Cheshire Children's Fund. Researchers from the University of Chester are doing the interviews and writing the report.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Professor Sarah Andrew, Dean of the School of Applied and Health Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, 01244 513055.

For further information

If you want to know more about the research, please ring the researchers, Katie Powell or Fiona Ward at the University of Chester on 01244 512058.

Thank you.

Appendix 2

Consent form for service providers



Consent Form for Cheshire Children's Fund research

Name of Researcher: Fiona Ward/Katie Powell

Please tick each box

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read and understand the information sheet for the Children's Fund research and have had the chance to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I agree to take part in an interview. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to this interview being audio taped. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of worker

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

One copy to be left with the worker and researcher takes the other

Appendix 3

Interview guide for service providers

The questions we would like to ask refer specifically to the element of your work that is funded through the Cheshire Children's Fund. At this point we are thinking about your service generally rather than with reference to a specific child or family.

1. What additional activities or services has the money from the Children's Fund allowed you to undertake? (one activity or range – details of activity/service)
 - When funded to/from?
 - Have services changed over time?
 - Where working (geographically)
 - With parents and/or children
 - How are parents/children identified – referral systems
 - Length of time with particular parents/children
 - Approximate number have worked with/currently working with
2. How do you see these CCF funded activities in relation to the ECM outcomes? (If they do see them within this framework) Which outcomes does this/do these services contribute to?
 - Stay safe
 - Be healthy
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic wellbeing

Thinking more about work with specific parents/children/families:

3. Can you tell me how you identify aims and objectives when you start to work with a child/family?
4. Do you use the ECM outcomes in thinking about the work with individual children/families, If yes, can you give us an example of how this would translate into work with individual parents/children?
5. Can you tell me how you measure the impact of the service you provide to an individual child/family?
6. (If they use ECM in thinking about work) Would you use the ECM outcomes to look at the impact of the service you provide for individual families around stay safe, be healthy etc? If yes, can you give an example of this?

Talk about process for selecting parents/children – to be approached one at a time, need consent from both parent and child. After consent granted, fill in questionnaire, send it and consent forms to us, we will then contact family (unless it would be more convenient to interview them whilst with project).

Appendix 4

Individual family questionnaire for service providers

Understanding the impact of the Cheshire Children's Fund
A study by the Centre for Public Health Research, University of Chester
Spring 2007

Family reference number (contact details to be provided separately)

Number of family members receiving a service

Age of children in family receiving a service

Number of adults receiving a service

Is there a main child client? Yes/No If yes, how old is this child?

Date of first family contact with the project

Who referred the child/family?

Why were they referred to the project?

Total number of contacts with the family

Total number of contacts within the last 6 months

What aims and objectives were set for the work with this child/family?

What activities does the project currently undertake with the child/family? Has this changed over time?

In what way(s) has this service made a difference to this child/family?

What difference (where applicable) has the service made to the family in relation to the ECM outcomes:

Stay safe

Be healthy

Enjoy and achieve

Make a positive
contribution

Achieve economic
well-being

Is there anything else you would like to say about your work with this child/
young person/family?

Appendix 5

Introductory letter to the family

Dear

We have been asked by Cheshire Children's Fund to look at some of the services that they are funding. This includes *(name of the project)*.

Cheshire Children's Fund wants to find out what difference projects have made to the lives of the children and families who have used them, what they liked about the service and anything that could have been done differently.

To do this work we want to speak to families who have used projects like *(name of the project)*. If you agree to take part, a researcher from the University of Chester would come to ask you a few questions and also talk to your child about how they feel about using *(name of the project)*. Each interview should last about 45 minutes. If you decide to take part, no names or details that will identify you or your child would ever be used in any reports.

Enclosed are two information sheets which provide more details about the project – one for you and one for your child. If you think you would be willing to speak to us about your experience with *(name of the project)*, please could you and your child fill in the consent forms – the project worker will then post them back to us – then we can arrange a time to meet you both.

We hope you can take part and are looking forward to speaking to you.

Fiona Ward / Katie Powell
Researchers

Appendix 6

Participant information sheet for parents

Parent/carers information about Cheshire Children's Fund research

You have been invited take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part it is important for you to understand why it is being done and what it will involve. Please read this sheet and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study for?

This research will look at the way that services funded through Cheshire Children's Fund have affected the lives of children and families. The information will be used to learn from the different ways that projects have worked with children and families and try to understand how they might have helped them.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because your family has used a service, (*name of the project*), provided by one of the projects funded by Cheshire Children's Fund.

What will happen if I take part?

We would like to conduct an interview to find out about the service you have received - the interview should last about 45 minutes. We would like to tape the interview so that the researcher can listen carefully during the interview.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a form to say you have had this information about the research. Even if you decide to take part, you can stop at any time and you don't have to give a reason.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

The research will increase our understanding about the difference that these services have made to the children and families and help projects learn from your experience. We do not think there are any disadvantages in taking part in the research.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Taking part is anonymous and no names or details that could identify you or your child would ever be used in any reports. The only thing we would need to disclose is if you tell us that you, or someone else, is in immediate danger of serious harm. In such a case I would need to report that to someone who might be able to help.

What will happen to the results?

A report will be written for the Cheshire Children's Fund who asked for the work to be done. We can send a summary of the report to you if you would like us to. A copy of the full report will be available at the project.

Who is paying for the evaluation?

The research is being paid for by the Cheshire Children's Fund. Researchers from the University of Chester are doing the interviews and writing the report.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Professor Sarah Andrew, Dean of the School of Applied and Health Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, 01244 513055.

For further information

If you want to know more about the research, please ring the researchers, Katie Powell or Fiona Ward at the University of Chester on 01244 512058.

Thank you

Appendix 7

Participant information sheet for children and young people

Child/young person's information about the Cheshire Children's Fund research project

You have been asked take part in a research project. You can decide whether you want to take part or not. Before you decide it is important for you to know a bit more about the research and what you will have to do. Please read this sheet and talk to someone about it if you need to. You can telephone us if you want to know more.

What is the study for?

The research is looking at the way that services like (name of project) have worked with children like you. We will use what people say to learn about the different things that projects do with children and families and understand how they might have helped them.

About us

Our names are Katie Powell and Fiona Ward. Our job is to talk to children and families about their experiences. We work for the Centre for Public Health Research at the University of Chester.

Why me?

You have been chosen because you have used (name of project).

What will happen if I take part?

We would like to ask you some questions about the sorts of things you do with (name of project) and how you feel about going there. We would like to audio tape this so that we can listen carefully to you and write things down afterwards. If you need to stop or take a break whilst we are talking, you can. We will talk to someone in your family as well about their contact with (name of project).

It's private!

Everything you tell us is private, unless you disclose that you, or someone else, is in immediate danger of serious harm. In such a case I would need to report that to someone who might be able to help. When we write the report we won't use any

names so no-one will know what you said. You can tell people what you said to us if you want to.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you will be asked to fill in a form and give it back to us. Even if you decide to take part, you can stop at any time and you don't have to give a reason.

What will happen then?

We will write a report for Cheshire Children's Fund who asked for the work to be done. We can send a shorter summary to you if you want one.

What if something goes wrong?

If you aren't happy about anything that happens during the research you can talk to your family or the worker at (name of project).

Any questions?

If you want to talk to us more about the research, please telephone us on 01244 512058 and ask for Katie or Fiona.

Appendix 8

Consent form for parents



Parent/carers consent form for Cheshire Children's Fund research

Please tick each box

I have read and understand the research information sheet and have had the chance to ask questions.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐

I agree to take part in an interview.

☐

I agree to the interview being audio taped.

☐

Name of parent/carer

Signature

Date

Name of project worker

Signature

Date

Your telephone number so researchers can arrange a time to speak to you

Appendix 9

Consent form for children and young people

Child/young person's consent form for Cheshire Children's Fund research project

Please answer yes or no to the following questions. This will tell us whether you want to be involved in the research project.

Have you read the information sheet?

YES / NO

Have you had the chance to ask questions?

YES / NO

Do you feel that you understand what taking part involves?

YES / NO

Do you know that you can stop the interview at any time and you don't have to give a reason?

YES / NO

Would you like to take part in the research project?

YES / NO

Please write your name here: _____

Appendix 10

Interview guide outline for parents

The interview with the service provider will have allowed the researcher to establish whether parents have had direct involvement with the service or whether they are reflecting on the impact upon their child.

It can also be clarified if the family is getting support from more than one Children's Fund provider – if so, the researcher will need to make it clear which project is the focus of the interview but information may also be given about a second provider.

Themes to be covered:

Getting to know about the service and starting to use it. Who referred them and for what reasons.

What the service does with them and/or their child, if the project is working with child only, how much they know about what the service is doing and whether they want to be more involved.

Likes and dislikes about the way the project operates and what they have done.

Perceived benefit from involvement, any difference to child/self.

Whether they have been involved with any other service around these issues. If so, discuss similarities and differences in approach and engagement.

If still using the project, how much longer they think they will be using the service, whether it is more of the same or service they receive is changing, what more will they get out of continued involvement.

What do they think would have happened if they had not received this service.

With the knowledge of activities undertaken and which ECM outcomes they were working towards with the child/family, discuss staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution.

Appendix 11

Example interview guide for parent - case study 11

Explain about the interview – looking at the service that the [the project] has provided and whether it has made a difference.

1. How long has your family been in contact with the centre?
2. How did you first hear about the centre?
3. How did you get in touch with the centre about the activities that you and your son are doing at the moment?
4. What sort of difficulties were your family facing at that time?
5. How did you feel about being involved with the centre, originally and recently?

Work with parent

6. What sort of things did you do with centre staff when you first came into contact with them?
7. How has your contact with the centre changed over the past 9 years?
8. What sort of things have you done with centre staff recently-since referral to the centre in April?
9. Did your involvement with the centre make a difference to you? Why do you say that?
10. What was the best thing that you did?
11. Is there anything that you did with the centre that you would change or would like to have done differently?

Work with children

12. Can you tell me about the sort of things that your son has done with the centre in the past?
13. What sort of things has he done since the referral in April?
14. What do you think your son got out of the different things that he did with the centre? (Think about each activity)
 - i. Knock-up scheme;
 - ii. Weekly sessions;
 - iii. Other activities.

Thinking about the difference that it has made

15. Services for children and young people are all working within a set of groupings called Every Child Matters – you may have heard about it. Can you say whether the things that your son did with the centre have helped him in the following ways?
 - a. Being Healthy (making healthy choices – food, exercise etc, feeling good about yourself)
 - b. Enjoying and achieving (attend and enjoy school and activities outside school)
 - c. Staying safe (at home and in other situations such as school and on the streets)
 - d. Making a positive contribution (getting involved in positive activities at school or in the community)
 - e. Achieving economic well-being (thinking about the future)
16. How might things have been different for your son if he had not come to the centre?
17. Could you say what has been the most important part of your son's involvement with Centre activities? Why do you say that?
18. Has your involvement and that of your son's had an impact on the rest of your family? In what ways?
19. Is there anything about your son's involvement with the centre that you would change or would like to have done differently?
20. How do you think your contact with the centre might change in the future? (Increase/decrease?) How do you feel about that?

Appendix 12

Interview guide for children/young people

The interview with the service provider will mean that the researcher knows the age of the child and when the child started receiving the service. The researcher can use this information to help the child think about before the intervention and now in terms of how old they were and what other things may have been happening at that time.

During the interview the researcher will make notes on the road picture (colour A3) and encourage the child to write and/or draw on there as well.

Themes to be covered

Before I went there

How the child got involved with (*the project*), what was happening then, talk about what that was like and how they were feeling then.

At the project

Early experiences with *the project* - how they felt, who they met, what it was like.

Activities they have done with the project – how decisions are made about what they do, whether the child has have any choice, whether the child knew what the project was aiming to do with them.

What they liked best about *the project* and anything they would like to change.

In the future

Discuss outcomes - if *the project/project worker* has made a difference to your life, how have things changed and how they feel now.

With the knowledge of activities undertaken and which ECM outcomes they were working towards with the child/young person, discuss staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution.

Appendix 13

Example interview guide for child - case study 9

Explain about the interview – looking at the service that (project worker) has provided and whether it has made a difference to him.

Activities

1. Do you remember how old you were when you started living at the refuge? How long did you live there? (How old were you when you moved here?)
2. Were there other children living at the house when you were there? Ages?
3. When did you first meet (project worker)?
4. Do you remember how she introduced herself or what she said about her job?
5. What did she do with you? – as much detail as possible – feelings about each activity – how decision was made to do it
 - a. outdoor sessions whilst at refuge
 - b. indoor activities with other children whilst at refuge
 - c. one-to-one work with (project worker)
 - d. outreach work since moved to new home
6. Were you surprised about the kind of things that (project worker) organised or did with you?
7. What was the best thing about the work that you did with (project worker)?
8. Is there anything in the work that you did with (project worker) that you would change or would like to have done differently?

Thinking about the difference that it made

9. Do you think you changed much whilst you were living at the refuge?
10. Thinking about the work that you did with (project worker)
 - a. Do you think it made a difference to the way you felt? In what way?
 - b. Do you think it made a difference to the things that you were doing?
 - c. If yes, What sort of things are you doing that you might not have done? What do you think you have got out of doing these things?
11. Do you still see (project worker)? If so, what have you been doing with her? How much longer do you think this contact will continue? How do you feel about having less contact with her?
12. Services for children and young people are all working within a set of groupings called Every Child Matters – you may have heard about it. Can you say whether the things that you did with (project worker) or the groups that she put you in touch with have helped you in the following ways?

-
- a. Being Healthy (making healthy choices – food, exercise etc, feeling good about yourself)
 - b. Enjoying and achieving (attend and enjoy school and activities outside school)
 - c. Staying safe (at home and in other situations such as school and on the streets)
 - d. Making a positive contribution (getting involved in positive activities at school or in the community)

13. What would you say has been the most memorable thing about the things you have done with (project worker)?

Appendix 14

Interview picture for children

